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186 (Australian aborigines from the mainland) they were not Tiwi and hence not
609 real people, or at least not human enough to share the islands with the chosen
people who owned them.

[101] Thus, the word "Tiwi" did not mean "people" in the sense of all human beings, but rather "we, the only people," or the chosen people who live on and own the islands, as distinct from any other alleged human beings who might show up from time to time on the beaches. This exclusion of outsiders from real "us-ness" and hence from real "human-ness" was continued when the Europeans began to arrive in the early nineteenth century, and certainly as late as 1930 the Tiwi continued to call and think of themselves as Tiwi, *the* people, and to use other words for all non-Tiwi, whether they were mainland aborigines, Malay fishermen, Japanese pearl-divers, French priests, or British officials, who penetrated into their exclusive little cosmos.

[173] Their firm tradition that the twenty-five miles of ocean were adequate
171 to isolate them from the mainland is confirmed by certain objective distributional evidence. Several characteristic features of mainland native technology were absent on Melville and Bathurst Islands, notably the spear thrower and the curved (or return) boomerang. To anthropologists, the idea of an Australian tribe lacking spear throwers and curved boomerangs is almost a contradiction in terms, and the only feasible explanation is isolation and hence failure of these mainland traits to diffuse to the islands.¹

[411] That no culture stands absolutely still in its technology no matter how isolated it may be is suggested by the fact that the Tiwi, while lacking the spear thrower and curved boomerang of the mainland, elaborated their [531] wooden spears to a complexity of design and a degree of decoration unknown on the mainland, and also developed a much greater assortment of straight throwing sticks, made of hardwood, than any mainland tribe. Moreover, their carved and elaborately painted grave posts are unique among Australian tribes, and point up both the Tiwi isolation from the mainland and the [764] favorable food situation which permitted the leisure time necessary to manufacture the elaborate posts as well as the elaborate ceremonial spears. In the [511] nontechnological aspects of their culture we find in many respects the same absence of mainland traits and the same elaboration of traits that were distinctively or even uniquely Tiwi. Male initiation ceremonies on the mainland focus upon circumcision or subincision or both; neither custom was practiced by the Tiwi, who instead included in their initiation ritual the forcible plucking out of the pubic hair of the novice. The degree of plural marriages achieved under their marriage rules was far greater than anything reported for the mainland; the absolute prohibition of any female, regardless of age, being without a husband was unknown elsewhere in Australia; certain features of the kinship system fail to conform to any of the mainland norms, and so on. Wherever we look in their culture we get the strong impression of an Aus-

[177] ¹ A toy spear thrower, played with by children, was in use, but this may be the
524 result of post-white contact. Its native name—*pau*—seems most un-Tiwi, and a likely guess is that it was introduced by Cooper's mainlanders, being accepted as a toy for children but scorned as childish by the adult men.

THE TRIBE AND THE BANDS • II

tralian tribe that was able to develop within the general Australian type of culture a number of distinct features, some of them unique, while at the same time lacking entirely other features which were widespread on the mainland. Tiwi isolation from the mainland explains the differences and the lacks; their favorable environment explains why they were able to develop certain traits along their own unique lines. [17]

The Tribe and the Bands

Because they were isolated and few outsiders came near them, they did very little as a united tribe. Everybody on the two islands was a Tiwi, and the Tiwi world stopped at the water's edge. Fuzziness on the edges of tribal territory—a chronic headache to anthropologists working with mainland tribes—did not exist, nor did the problem of marriage outside the tribe. All Tiwi, of course, spoke the same language and practiced the same customs and regarded themselves as *the* people; these were almost the only respects in which they could be said to do anything as a tribal unit. There was no tribal government, there were no tribal officials, and no occasions which required the whole tribe to assemble together as a collective entity. For daily and yearly living, the important group was the band or horde,² of which there were nine. The total area of the two islands is about 3000 square miles, but some of this is swampy, some of it waterless, some of it mosquito-infested mangrove jungle, and the suitability of the rest for native living varies a good deal. Hence, the actively used and lived-in areas for each band probably averaged about two hundred square miles each and, in any case, there was not a very close relationship between band size and area occupied. Details of band size at various times are given in a later chapter, but, typically, Tiwi bands probably varied in size between a hundred and three hundred people. [131]

The band was the territorial group with which a man most closely identified himself. Though the band lived from day to day spread out over a wide area and a man might not see many of his fellow band-members for weeks at a time, the average Tiwi thought of the two or three hundred square miles of band territory as his "own country" and of his fellow members as his own people. This is why the tribal name—Tiwi—so seldom needed to be used at home on the islands. It did not identify one group as distinct from another, since all locals were Tiwi. Just as in a New York suburb one does not say that there are some Americans in the house next door, but may say that there are some Texans or some Californians or some people from Michigan next door, so a Tiwi, seeing a group of visitors arriving in his band territory, would immediately identify them as Malaula or Rangwila or by whatever band they belonged to. A father would say casually, "I have betrothed my daughter to a [423]

² Radcliffe-Brown, the great authority on Australian tribal society, tried to introduce the word "horde" for the Australian local group, but probably because of its suggestion to the popular mind of a dense concentration of people, it has never become established and in these pages we have used the more neutral word "band."

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- 592 hold rather than the family. There was no ambiguity about its "living together" aspect; there were many ambiguities about its kinship aspects. To some of these unusual domestic usages we now turn.

Marriage by Betrothal

- 589 In many nonliterate societies, including most, if not all of the mainland Australian tribes, there is a tendency to believe that the main purpose in life for a female is to get married. The Tiwi subscribed to this idea, but firmly carried it to its logical conclusion; namely, that all females must get married, regardless of age, condition, or inclination. They (and they almost alone among human societies) took the very slight step from saying "All females *should* be married" to saying "All females *must* be married." As a result, in aboriginal times there was no concept of an unmarried female in Tiwi ideology, no word for such a condition in their language, and in fact, no female in the population without at least a nominal husband. Their own explanation of this unique situation was connected with their beliefs about conception and where babies come from. Anthropologists have long been aware that the Australian aborigines generally (and indeed some of the Melanesians, such as the famous case of the Trobriand Islands) ignored the role of the male in human conception and firmly believed that a woman becomes pregnant because a spirit has entered into her body. The Tiwi were no exception, but went a step further than the mainlanders in dealing with the dangerous situation created by the unpredictability of the spirits. Since any female was liable to be impregnated by a spirit at any time, the sensible step was to insist that every female have a husband *all the time* so that if she did become pregnant, the child would always have a father. As a result of this logical thinking, all [587] Tiwi babies were betrothed before or as soon as they were born; females were thus the "wives" of their betrothed husbands from the moment of birth onward. For similar reasons, widows were required to remarry at the gravesides [587] of their late husbands, and this rule applied even to ancient hags who had already buried half a dozen previous husbands in the course of a long life. It can readily be seen that these rules—prenatal betrothal of female infants and immediate remarriage of all widows—effectively eliminated all possibility of an unmarried female from Tiwi society. They also eliminated any possibility of an unmarried mother or a fatherless child. No matter where the unpredictable spirit chose to create a baby, whether it was in the body of a pretty young woman, a toothless old hag, or a little girl of six or seven, the pregnant female would have a husband, and the children when born would have a father. The Tiwi were thus probably the only society in the world with an illegitimacy rate of zero.

584 The practical application of these two unusual rules had certain unusual consequences. The rule of prenatal betrothal obviously gave a great deal of 851 power to the person with the right to betroth, and in Tiwi this right belonged 593

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587 jointly, or any one of them singly, were able to translate that claim into marriage depended on the other claims. Brotherhood in itself gave no exclusive right to widows, but of course a brother, being necessarily of the same clan and frequently of the same band as the deceased husband, was well in line to assert a claim to the widow if he could make the claim good. cursory inspection of the genealogies reveals, however, a surprisingly small number of cases of men taking over the widows of their deceased brothers. At best it was a very minor factor in Tiwi marriage customs.

[595] The parallel custom of the sororate—that is, of sisters being married
[584] to the same husband—was more common. It occurred both in connection with infant bestowal, by a father promising *all* his daughters by a particular wife to the same husband, or in connection with widow remarriage, whereby two or more full sisters, previously married to the same husband, passed together on his death to the same new husband. The sororate occurred more frequently in the first form than in the second, largely because, as already mentioned, widows had more say in their own marriages than baby girls had, but there was nothing obligatory nor required about it, as is shown by the frequent cases in which a father bestowed all his daughters by one wife on the same man but on the early death of that man rebestowed them *seriatim* on several different husbands. One got the impression, though no Tiwi ever made the point explicit, that within the Tiwi bestowal system the prevailing high rate of infantile and child mortality was an important factor in sustaining the sororate principle to the extent that it did exist. A father who bestowed upon a man the first daughter borne by a certain wife was almost obliged to bestow upon the same man the second daughter of the same wife if the first one died in infancy. Moreover, since most fathers bestowed their daughters with an eye to their own advantage, it was clearly desirable if he wanted to cement the goodwill of a prospective son-in-law, to promise him *all* the daughters produced by a certain wife, so that even though most of them died in infancy, at least one or two would be delivered in good condition at the age of puberty. [557] The aim of bestowal was to win friends and influence people, and a bestowal of a child who died before she reached the son-in-law did a father little good. A shrewd father could avoid this risk by following the sororate principle; a stupid or feckless father who scattered his daughters widely could well end up with as many disappointed sons-in-law as friendly ones, as the infantile and child mortality took its heavy toll of his young daughters. In the genealogies, sororate marriages in some form occur much more frequently than levirate marriages, but nonetheless their incidence is such as to indicate that they were a relatively minor feature in Tiwi marriages and that their occurrence was most frequently due to careful fathers trying to insure sons-in-law against disappointment, and themselves against charges of nondelivery.

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582 No account of marriage in any Australian tribe can go very far without raising the difficult matter of the kinship system, since all the accounts we have of mainland Australian tribes tell us that all marriages there took place within a rigid kinship framework which required everybody to marry somebody who was automatically his or her cross-cousin (for example, a man and a daughter

LEVIRATE, SORORATE, AND CROSS-COUSIN MARRIAGE • 27

of his mother's brother).¹⁰ Enough has been said already to indicate that in Tiwi marriage nothing was automatic. Females were given in marriage by their fathers, or (to a lesser extent) by their brothers, or (to a still lesser extent) by their sons. But fathers died and were succeeded by the men their widows remarried, and these men renamed all the widow's children, and by renaming them established some rights to make marriage decisions for the females. Therefore, cross-cousin marriage in Tiwi was merely part of the total system of marriage and had to adjust itself to the rest of the system. In theory, fathers could only bestow their infant daughters on men who stood to them in the relation of sisters' sons. Conversely, every man who received a bestowed wife received her from a man who was technically his mother's brother and of course the girl's father. To this extent the Tiwi were a tribe who practiced cross-cousin marriage and their kinship system belonged to one of the commonest Australian types, that which Radcliffe-Brown called Type I, having investigated it among the mainland tribe called the Kariara.¹¹ But a kinship system of the Kariara type could not accommodate all the complexities that had been introduced into Tiwi life by the emphasis on infant bestowal and widow remarriage. In particular, the generations kept getting badly mixed up, as for instance in the very common case of old men bestowing their infant daughters on other old men of their own age group, and in return receiving as infant wives (or wards) daughters of those old men. With this happening constantly, it was difficult to maintain the kinship principle that recipients of wives were always sons of the donor's sister and donors were always brothers of the recipient's mother. Which was mother's brother and which was sister's son in the case of two old men busily swapping daughters was a problem that put a severe strain on a Kariara-type kinship system. And widow remarriage introduced further complexities. We have already mentioned the case of two young men, Antonio and Dominico, who through a judicious use of widow-remarriage had ended up married to each other's elderly mothers. This was no isolated case; many pairs of men of like age were married to each other's mothers. Who called whom "father" and who called whom "son" became an insoluble riddle in such cases.

To avoid further involvement in the labyrinthine complexities of Australian kinship organization, all that we need say here is that the Tiwi had unscrambled the potential confusion introduced into their kinship categories by inventing a few new terms which, superimposed upon their Kariara-type system, kept everything straight. In Kariara, and generally among all the mainland tribes, no kinship distinction was made between potential wife and actual wife or between potential "in-laws" and actual "in-laws." A Kariara male called all the girls who were eligible for marriage to him by the same term (*Nnba*, usually translated mother's brother's daughter); all the fathers of such girls

¹⁰ The definitive work on Australian kinship systems is Radcliffe-Brown 1930-31, and there is a large technical literature on the subject. See also Elkin 1951; Berndt 1953 and 1957; Murdock 1949.

¹¹ See Radcliffe-Brown 1913.

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starvation level than was the case with many of the mainland tribes.² Even to talk about the Tiwi in near-starvation terms seems quite incongruous, for there was an abundance of native food available the whole year around and their only problem was to collect or catch it. We regard the development of their large multiple-wife household as essentially their own evolutionary solution to the problem of finding the most efficient unit of food production. Abundant food was there in the bush in its raw state; the most efficient way to extract it was by a work unit represented by such households as those of Ki-in-kumi, or Tu'untalumi, with the old remarried widows directing the young women and the hunting and fish spearing being done by the younger males.

Even the smallest households nearly always contained at least one old female veteran of the food quest who knew the bush like the palm of her hand and could wrestle some food out of the most inhospitable district. The only households that ever went hungry—and they only overnight or at worst for twenty-four hours or so—were the small households of only one or two wives, especially if both wives were young and inexperienced or young and flighty or both. Such households were uneconomic and were rare. On the other hand, the apparently absurd households such as those in which two young men shared their respective elderly mothers as wives, made good economic sense. Any attempt by two such young men to substitute two young wives or even four young wives for the two old ladies would have drastically reduced the standard of living of the household. When young wives arrived in Tiwi households they were not regarded as replacements for the old crones but joined as reinforcements and apprentices to the skilled workers—the veterans. The sexual aspects of marriage were necessarily subordinated to the housekeeping or food-production aspects, which is why in the previous section we spoke of every young man laying the foundation of his household by marrying an elderly widow usually long before there was any young wife in sight.

Since the bigger the household the more food it produced for its own consumption, there was a tendency for the smaller and therefore hungrier households to hang around the fringes of the bigger ones. Though every household was autonomous and could camp and collect food anywhere in the band territory in which it roamed, it was rare to find all the households in a band distributed evenly over the available territory. In Malau, Enquirio's household and that of Merapanui were usually to be found camped together, since the two men were full brothers and not in competition with each other. Also camped with or near them on any given occasion would be a few other small households. Such a combined group as this would, all told, amount to between forty and fifty people camping at the same spot and remaining together for weeks at a time. Under mainland conditions in most areas, a gathering of forty people for ten days at a time in the same locality was unheard of, except on

² As was pointed out earlier, the best-watered and most fertile areas of the mainland were the ones attractive to white settlement, and the tribes who inhabited such areas (for example, Victoria or coastal Queensland) were wiped out quickly. Most of the mainland tribes who survived long enough to be studied by modern anthropologists were tribes whose habitats were unfavorable both for native and for white occupation.

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361 special rare ceremonial occasions, because of the poverty of the food supply.
 592 The prevalence of such large camps among the Tiwi supports our general
 [171] thesis that their native food supply was, for Australia, unusually plentiful, and
 that, in this sense, the Tiwi were a "rich" Australian tribe.

When camped together thus, the various households kept their distance, with the main fires and shelters of each separated by some twenty or thirty yards from the others, and during the day when everybody (except the old men) was out food collecting, the camps were almost deserted. When the food gatherers returned in twos and threes in the late afternoon, each household would cook and eat at its own fires as a unit, but if they wished, members of the smaller households, in which food returns for the day were probably smaller per capita than those of the bigger households, would "drop in during supper" upon the latter and supplement their own slender meal. Such hospitality was always extended on an individual basis; some member of the bigger household, usually a senior wife, would offer to one of the visitors a piece of meat or a dish of *kwoka* and if rebuked by her husband she would justify her act by mentioning her own kin relationship to the visitor, as if to stress that the kindness was her own individual gesture and did not commit the whole household to friendliness. Heads of large households were, however, generally very permissive if such handouts were made by senior females of their household to women or children of other households; it was handouts to adult male outsiders, especially young male outsiders, that were likely to provoke snarls or reprimands from the old man. This was in line with the general hostility of all old men to all young unmarried men that ran through all aspects of Tiwi culture.

After darkness fell, such a camp, with three or four households all resting within easy hearing distance of each other, became highly animated with men visiting from fire to fire as the women, who were not encouraged to walk about after dark, gossiped around their own fires. Little productive work could be done after dark, though a few cooking chores and food-preparation activities were performed, and most people went to sleep early unless the shouted conversations from fire to fire earlier in the evening had started an argument. If an argument did arise, the participants might go on abusing each other at long range for hours, with many of the listeners becoming involved and the rest remaining awake to enjoy the row.

Such rows were almost invariably outgrowths of the constant suspicion with which older men regarded younger men. This suspicion was in turn part of the price the Tiwi had to pay for the efficient type of food-production unit that they had evolved. This production unit, to reach maximum economic efficiency, required the vast majority of all females to be concentrated in the households of a very small number of husbands; namely, the very oldest men. As a necessary correlate, men under twenty-eight had no wives at all and very few men under forty had any wife except elderly and physically very unattractive widows. The efficient economic organization thus obviously created a moral and social problem—the problem of how to keep the unmarried young men away from the young women. The old head of the household had a double role:

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on whom, but they also brooded long and suspiciously upon who had supported whom and why, either verbally or with spear in hand. In addition, all the incidents of the battle, in minute detail, were relayed to the rest of the tribe who had not been present, and many of these absentees would discover, among the proceedings, things they did not like or suspicious-looking actions on the part of some of their competitors or putative friends. These they would weave into their own strategies and store up for future use. An elder frequently found some basis for a new grievance against somebody in the events of a battle at which he had not even been present.

Finally, through all these disputes and hostile actions between senior men ran their united suspicion of bachelors. The only "battle" in two years between large groups drawn from distinct bands that had a clear-cut and definite final act was one fought in Rangu in late 1928. On that occasion, after disputing and fighting among themselves from early morning until mid-afternoon, all the old men present from both war parties gradually channeled all their anger toward one unfortunate young Mandiimbula bachelor whom they finally accused of going around from band to band creating misunderstandings between various elders. Several elders on both sides testified publicly that their mistrust of each other had started shortly after the bachelor in question had begun hanging around their households; whereupon the senior warriors of the two opposing armies had no difficulty in deciding that most of their suspicions of each other "were all his fault," and with great unanimity ganged up on the bachelor and quickly clubbed him into unconsciousness for being a troublemaker and a suspicion spreader. In the midst of battle the gerontocracy had reasserted its solidarity by finding a bachelor scapegoat upon whom to unload all their mutual suspicions and aggressions.

Religious Activities

If by religious activities we mean those beliefs and practices which pertain to unseen or supernatural forces, including rituals whose performance somehow affects those forces, then Tiwi religion readily crystallized around three focal points. These were: 1) their elaborate system of day-to-day taboos; 2) the elaborate set of beliefs and rituals pertaining to death; and 3) their complicated initiation ceremonies for young men. Add to these their myths and folklore about creation and their tribal past, and the whole of Tiwi religion has been covered. Space permits only brief mention of these three focal points.

TABOO In earlier chapters we have pointed out several aspects of life in which Tiwi culture diverged sharply from what anthropologists have come to regard as Australian mainland norms and we have suggested that these differences from the mainland are most reasonably to be attributed to either Tiwi isolation or favorable food supply, or some combination of both factors. In their religious life this same line of explanation continues to have validity. To those familiar with the cultures of Australian tribes, perhaps

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- 171 nothing is so startling as to be told that the Tiwi almost completely lacked
 789 what we must call "positive" magic. Such familiar mainland practices as bone
 [754] pointing or "singing" a man to injury or death were completely unknown on
 the islands, and though references to people dying through supernatural
 agency were often made, it was very hard to find any positive techniques or
 known practitioners of such techniques. Briefly the Tiwi may be said to have
 believed that magical acts were possible but to have lacked any knowledge of
 how to perform them. If, as anthropology is wont to teach, magic is used in
 the simpler societies to handle and control the unpredictable or mysterious
 areas of life, then this absence of magic among the Tiwi needs an explanation.
 13 Our hypothesis is that the Tiwi did not use magic in human relations because
 [82] they had never invented magic for use in other unpredictable areas of life—
 [789] for example, to control the natural world. And they had never invented magic
 to control their natural world because their physical environment was on the
 whole a satisfactory and not a hostile universe.

If we run through the areas of life that many of the simpler peoples
 use magical means to control, we find that many of them were not problems
 for the Tiwi. The rainfall and water supply were more than adequate; the
 food supply was good, needing only people to come and gather it; wild animals
 [164] (except snakes and crocodiles) were unknown; tropical diseases (except yaws)
 73] scarcely existed; cyclones, tornadoes, and earthquakes were very rare, and
 thunder and lightning were no more frightening there than in, say, Chicago.
 [76] Death, of course, is mysterious and unpredictable everywhere, but to handle
 764] that they had most elaborate burial and mourning customs that were not
 magical but collective rituals. Perhaps the most favorable feature in the
 whole friendly Tiwi universe was the absence of any neighboring tribe. Their
 101 cultural isolation removed all fear or suspicion of what the foreigners next
 131 door might be up to, and one gets the impression from the literature,
 182 though it has not been systematically explored, that the hotheds of magic
 754 making and sorcery were areas of the primitive world, like Melanesia or Central
 Australia, where people were acutely conscious of their neighbors and always
 expecting magic and sorcery to be directed by them across the village or tribal
 boundaries. The Tiwi, having no neighbors, had nobody to be suspicious of
 except each other, and their suspicions of each other were mostly rational
 suspicions, of men motivated like themselves and using the same political
 tricks against each other.

784 The strongest support for the hypothesis that the Tiwi found their
 environment a friendly and reassuring universe to live in comes from their
 wide elaboration and reliance upon the negative form of magic called taboo.
 As a tribe they were magic free but taboo ridden. Their generic word for
 anything sacred or forbidden or untouchable was *pukimani*, a word which in
 its most common form referred to a state of special being in which a person
 or thing temporarily was. Thus mourners were *pukimani* for the period of
 their mourning, youths undergoing initiation were *pukimani* during the cere-
 monies, a woman who had just given birth was *pukimani* for a week or two
 afterwards. Dead bodies were *pukimani* until buried; graveposts were *pukimani*

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771 sister's son being initiated, the attitude of a Tiwi toward the whole *pukimani*
 784 state was essentially a passive attitude. *Pukimani* behavior was something one
 [181] accepted and conformed to when required; it was in no way an active attempt
 to change nature, people, food, gods, spirits, or anything else in the universe.
 It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that since their *pukimani* system
 offered them no handle by which to seek actively to alter the universe in which
 they lived, the Tiwi found that universe to their liking as it was. Unlike the
 tribes of central Australia who lavished a lot of thought upon magical methods
 of improving the food supply or the rainfall, the Tiwi believed and acted on
 the belief that as long as they observed their *pukimani* taboos, the food would
 continue to be as abundant and the rains as regular as they had always been.
 [171] The central Australians, by seeking to coerce nature through magic, suggest
 that they found nature unsatisfactory; the Tiwi, by relying upon passive taboo-
 observance alone, suggest rather that their relationship to nature was an
 acceptable equilibrium that they wanted to preserve, not change. And if every-
 body observed his *pukimani* taboos when required, that equilibrium would
 remain undisturbed. Hence the antisocial man in Tiwi was not the maker of
 individual magic (he was unknown, anyway) but the nonobserver of taboo.
 By his nonobservance he threatened to upset the normally satisfactory equilib-
 [626] rium between man and nature. For a senior Tiwi male to be charged publicly
 with breaking *pukimani* rules was a disgrace and a blow to his prestige and his
 position in public opinion. His behavior was possibly a sin against the spirits
 but it was certainly a shame in the eyes of his fellows. *Pukimani* observance
 was thus a matter of respectability to a much greater degree than it was a
 matter of pleasing the spirits.

765 DEATH As was mentioned above, death is the natural phenomenon
 around which the Tiwi had woven their most elaborate web of ritual. The most
 frequent and most important Tiwi ceremonies were the mourning ceremonies,
 [554] and they came in three sizes—small, medium, and large—depending on the
 [561] age, sex, and importance of the dead person. The mourning ceremonies which
 [562] drew the crowds were not held until some time after the death and burial.
 764 All bodies of dead persons were buried within twenty-four hours of their death
 by digging a hole near the camp where the death had occurred and placing
 the body, wrapped in bark, in it. Near most well-used camping spots there
 was already a graveyard marked by old graveposts, and the latest corpse was
 buried there or near there. Seldom was the body carried any distance for burial.
 If a person died even less than a mile from an old burial ground, there was
 little inclination to carry the body that far. He would be buried, instead,
 within perhaps a hundred yards of where he died. This had certain awkward
 repercussions for social organization, since occasionally a person died while
 away from his home district and, being buried where he died, his ceremonies
 were held and his posts erected in a district in which his immediate family
 [591] did not live. Young men often used this to validate a change of residence,
 giving as their reason for living in a band territory in which they had not
 grown up, the location there of their father's graveposts.

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he still had six years to go after that, not finishing the final grade of *Mikingula* until somewhere past the age of 24 or 25. 302
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In contrast with the mainland initiation ceremonies, we think the most interesting point about Tiwi initiation resides not in the formal ceremonies but in the removal from the food-production units, for long periods of the year, of all the young males between the ages of 14 and 25. It is true that they did not spend all their time in seclusion and that after the age of twenty they remained mostly in their household camps, where they contributed to the household food production. Nonetheless, it remains clear that only a very well-off tribe could afford to allow so much time off from food production to all its young hunters. Tiwi fathers, it would seem, in arranging for the initiation of their sons to begin just when they were becoming productive hunters, were willing to sacrifice that productivity for less tangible advantages. The youths were secluded and guarded in the bush while getting an education, were not only out of the work force but were also out of the predatory-bachelor force. A Tiwi elder made sacrifices to "send his sons to college" but he breathed easier to know that the sons of the other elders were all there too. 171
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[883]

All males without exception had to go through the full initiation cycle, and from the time of their first forcible seizure at the age of 14-15 to their final graduation at 24-26, they were in a state of *pukimani* and their personal names were strictly taboo to everybody in the tribe. Each youth was referred to only by his grade name, *Marukumarni* for the first year, *Mikingula* for the last four years, and so on. And here we return finally to a point which was mentioned much earlier—namely, the complete unimportance in tribal eyes of all males below the age of twenty-five. Until they had completed the final stage of initiation, Tiwi males were still boys; they did not even have names. Occasionally, when collecting genealogies and coming upon a reference to a young man, the innocent anthropologist would ask, "Is he married?" In tones of the deepest contempt the informant would reply, "That kid, how could he be married? He's still *Mikingula*." Though *Mikingula* was the stage typically reached by a man at about 20-21 and lasted for the next four years, to the Tiwi it was still a stage in the life of a boy. Not until he had finished as *Mikingula* could he step out into the world and life of men. How he spent the years immediately after finishing initiation decided how soon some senior man would think sufficiently highly of him to aid him in acquiring his first ancient widow. 381
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CHAPTER I

The Art of the Tiwi

I. THE ART FORMS

ALTHOUGH Melville Island is separated from the mainland of Australia by the Dundas Strait, only fourteen miles in width, the art forms on either side of this swift-running tideway bear little resemblance to each other. That of the mainland, of which the bark and cave paintings of Oenpelli are typical (Mountford, 1956, pp. 112-364; Spencer, 1928, pp. 802-24), is representational, and among the most decorative art forms employed by the Australian aborigines, while that of Melville Island is highly formalized, and cannot be interpreted without the aid of the artist. In this respect (although they employ different motifs) the art of the Melville Islanders resembles that of the aborigines of Central Australia (Mountford, 1937, pp. 84-95).

2. MEDIUMS OF EXPRESSION

The aborigines of Melville Island,¹ like those on the mainland (Spencer, 1928, p. 793) painted designs on the inside of the sheets of bark that made up their wet-weather shelters. Basedow (1913, p. 320, Pls. 19-20) figured bark paintings he collected from bark shelters on Melville Island, and Campbell (1934, p. 151), referring to shelters he saw near Fort Dundas (Punata), in Apsley Straits, writes, "Some of them were ornamented with figures drawn in white pipeclay; one, in particular, was neatly and regularly done all over, representing the cross-bars of a cell."²

Under normal tribal conditions, however, it is in the carving and painting of the elaborate burial poles and the ceremonial spears, coupled with the decorating of the large bark baskets, that the aborigines of Melville Island find an outlet for their artistic efforts.

The effect of the *pukamuni* burial ceremony was evident in many of the bark paintings collected on the expedition. For example, Pl. 3D, Pl. 34F, and Pl. 34A, are essentially the same designs as a Melville Island artist would use to

¹ For the sake of simplicity I will, in future, use the term, Melville Island, or the tribal name, Tiwi, to indicate the Melville and Bathurst Island culture, both of which are part of the same tribal unit.

² This would have been a design similar to that on bark painting (Pl. 32D).

- 531 decorate a burial pole; and others, Pl. 20, Pl. 100, and Pl. 112, similar to those he would paint on the ceremonial baskets.

I did not see or hear of figures being made in bark (Mountford, 1956, p. 443, fig. 65c, D); moulded in wax (Elkin and the Berndts, 1950, Pl. 21, Mountford, 1956, Pl. 143) or in the sands of the sea-shore (Mountford, 1956, p. 404, Pl. 91c, D), as is done in north-eastern Arnhem Land. Nevertheless, [532] the men did carve large burial poles in the form of human beings and smaller full-length figures, associated with the *putamani* ceremonies. These figures bore some small resemblance to those recorded from north-eastern Arnhem Land (Berndt, 1948, Figs. A, B, Pls. 1, 2; Mountford, 1956, Pls. 130-40).

3. TECHNIQUES

- 386 (a) COLOURS. The pigments used for the decoration of the burial poles and the production of the bark paintings, were red, yellow and white ochres. As there was no suitable black pigment on the islands, the artists used crushed charcoal in its place.

[317] The source of the best ochres is a pit at Imilu on Cape Van Diemen (Fig. 1). This ochre, called *imilu*, is a bright yellow when collected,⁷ but, when heated in the fire, it changes to a clear red. A soft white stone is common along the beaches. The ochres are not ground on a stone, as on the mainland (Mountford, 1956, p. 11), but, being friable, are crushed and mixed in a large cockle shell with water and fixative.

The aborigines often spoke of a superior ochre at Numanira, northern Melville Island (Fig. 1), which could be gathered only at low tide. I did not see any of this ochre in use.

- [314] (b) FIXATIVES. Three different types of fixative are used to ensure that the painted designs, both on the poles and the baskets, were as permanent as possible. They were: the sticky gelatinous sap of one of the tree orchids (*Dendrobium* sp.); the wax and honey of the wild bee, well mixed together; [237] and the yolks of the eggs of the sea-going turtle. The fixative was either mixed with the pigments or rubbed on the painting surface.

- 412 (c) BRUSHES. Simple brushes, made of strips of bark of varying widths, square across the bottom, chewed at one end, and held as in Fig. 2A and 2C, were used for the bulk of the work.⁸ For making the dots, however, the artists used a

[423] ⁷ There did not appear to be any restriction on the gathering of this ochre; any aboriginal could go to Imilu and take as much as he wished.

● [171] ⁸ The long flexible brush of the aborigines of Arnhem Land (Mountford, 1956, p. 12, fig. 3), was not used at Melville Island, although the bark brush (Fig. 2B) was often held in a similar manner.

CHAPTER II

The Creation Period

WHATEVER differences may exist between the Melville Island cultures and those of the mainland, and, in some aspects, those differences are considerable, the creation stories indicate that the two cultures sprang from the same source.⁹ 174 773

At the close of the creation period, both on Melville Island and the mainland, the original creators, men and women, were transformed, or transformed themselves, into various creatures, plants, natural forces or heavenly bodies. 771 773 82

Although I would not claim that the list of totems is complete, I feel certain that the aboriginal artists pictured, on the bark paintings, most of the areas created by their mythical forbears. More detailed research may reveal additional totemic places. 532^x 771 82

The list of the thirty-four totemic ancestors illustrated on the bark paintings is curiously unbalanced in its distribution. More than a third of these are trees, almost all eucalypts. The remaining four groups are: the natural forces, creatures of the air, the sea, and one inanimate totem, i.e. red ochre. Neither land animals nor reptiles are referred to in the bark paintings of the totemic places, although they appear in the myths.

These facts contrast strongly with the Central Australian beliefs regarding their totemic creatures (Mountford, 1948, p. 23; Spencer and Gillen, 1899, p. 387), where almost every living thing, particularly the creatures, took some part in the creation of the topography; plant totems are uncommon in Central Australia. 171 173 82

The same Central Australian characteristics are also evident in the myths of Grooteylandt (Mountford, 1956, p. 21), although in the adjacent Arnhem Land, the great creators, i.e., the *Wawalik* Sisters (Warner, 1937, p. 250), and the *Djungkoo* Sisters (Berndt, 1952; Mountford, 1956, p. 267; Warner, 1937, p. 336), made the bulk of the topography, plants and creatures.

Although the Grooteylandt pantheon, like that of Melville Island, originated as men and women, they were, almost without exception, changed to non-human totems, whereas the great creators of Arnhem Land, the *Wawalik* and the *Djungkoo* Sisters, have always remained human.

⁹ Little research has been carried out on the creation stories of the Australian aborigines; Spencer and Gillen (1899, p. 387) giving the most detailed account. [114]

773 As the sharpened sticks pierced his feet, *Mudani* fell to the ground calling
825 *girik-girik* (his call today), then changing himself into the fork-tailed kite
(*Milvus migrans*), rose into the air and flew away.¹⁷

Quickly *Jurumu* sought out the woman, *Parabrums*, and proposed marriage, but she, knowing of his treachery, angrily refused him. Incensed and disappointed, *Jurumu* struck *Parabrums* on either side of the head with his throwing stick, cutting her head so badly that long pieces of bleeding skin hung down on each side.

Screaming with pain (her present-day call), *Parabrums* changed herself into the masked plover (*Lobityx miles*). One can still see those red flaps of skin hanging on either side of her face. Intent on revenge, *Mudani's* brother, *Pilibilininga*, crept up behind *Jurumu* and speared him in the back. Shouting "*gutli-gutli*" (his call), *Jurumu* changed himself into the wedge-tailed eagle (*Oroaetus anax*). When *Pilibilininga* saw this he became a small brown hawk (unidentified).

773 *Jurumu* appears in another early creation myth when he, his wife *Narina*,
and her brother, *Kilpuruni*, lived in the same camp. One day, when the woman was out in the forest collecting food for her husband, *Kilpuruni* came up and asked for some. *Narina* offered him an opossum, but he said he was not fond of that meat. After refusing wild honey and several other foods, *Kilpuruni* admitted that he really wanted *Narina* to go in the bush with him. *Narina* refused, saying they could not do so, because they were brother and sister. However, *Kilpuruni*, by persistence and cajolery, finally had his way.

On returning to camp, *Narina* confessed her misdeeds to *Jurumu*, who, although he was angry and punished his wife, did not mention the matter to his brother-in-law. Biding his time, he invited *Kilpuruni* to go with him to look for hives of wild bees.

They had both climbed a high eucalyptus tree, when *Jurumu* showed his brother-in-law a hive at the end of a long projecting branch. Waiting until *Kilpuruni* had climbed out to investigate the hive, *Jurumu* cut the limb, which crashed to the ground on the top of the unfortunate victim.

[825] *Kilpuruni*, all flattened out, changed himself into the present-day blanket lizard (*Chamysaurus kingii*); *Narina*, who, in spite of his misdeeds, was fond of *Kilpuruni*, became the black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksi*) and still mourns for her unfortunate brother, while *Jurumu*, now the wedge-tailed eagle, is always on the look-out to kill and eat his wife's seducer.

• [171] ¹⁷ A myth, with many points of resemblance, except that the main actors were crows and a wedge-tailed eagle, was collected by the author from the Adnjamatana tribe of the northern Flinders Ranges of South Australia. (Mountford, 1937, field notes.)

THE CREATION PERIOD

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3. THE DEATH OF PURUKUPALI

While many of the people of the early creation period were spreading over the island, the original family, *Wuriupranala*, *Murupiangkala* and *Purukupali*, and their descendants, had established themselves on south-eastern Melville Island; *Murupiangkala*, with her daughter *Tukumbina* and her grandchildren, *Tukimbini*, *Wilindula* and *Numanirakala*, at Murupianga; *Wuriupranala* with her son *Wuriuprinili*, at Wuriupi; and *Purukupali*, his wife *Bima* and their infant son, *Djinini*, at Impanali (Fig. 1). 773

Purukupali was strongly attached to *Djinini*. Every morning, when *Bima* went out food-gathering, she would take *Djinini* with her, bringing him back to *Purukupali* at the end of the day, together with the food she had collected.

In the same camp lived an unmarried man, *Tjapara*, who used to persuade *Bima* to leave her child asleep under the shade of a tree and sneak into the forest with him. This intrigue had been going on for some time when, on one very hot day, *Bima* stayed away from her child too long, for, when she returned, the shade had moved and *Djinini* was lying dead in the hot sun. Distraught with grief, *Bima* chanted her song of remorse—

Bili wangia tingatia

(Evil woman am I to have caused the death of my son.)

When *Purukupali* heard of the death of *Djinini*, his anger knew no bounds.¹⁸ Striking his wife on her head with a throwing stick, and hunting her into the forest, he decreed that death should come to the whole world. As his son had died, said *Purukupali*, so the whole of creation would die, and once dead, never again would come to life. There was no death before that time.

Tjapara remonstrated with *Purukupali*, and pleaded for the dead body of *Djinini*, promising to restore him to life in three days.¹⁹ But *Purukupali* was so adamant that the two men quarrelled about this matter until *Purukupali*, losing his temper, threw a *muruguna* (Pl. 31D) at *Tjapara* who replied with the forked throwing stick, *miluanta* (Pl. 32C) known today as *Tjapara's muruguna*. Soon the two men were locked in a deadly struggle, each wounding the other severely in the face and body.

¹⁸ My informant stated that it was not the intrigues of *Tjapara* and *Bima* that enraged *Purukupali*, but that, by their selfishness, they had caused the death of his son.

¹⁹ This is a reversal of ideas. In the mainland myths it is the moon that brings death to mankind (Mountford, 1956, p. 303), but among the Tiwi, it is the moon who endeavours to prevent death coming to the world. This is one of the many factors that suggest that the Tiwi must have been separated from the effects of the mainland cultures for a considerable period. [171] [174]

773 the ceremonial baskets. But he did not fulfil his obligations. This breach of faith so infuriated the other fish-men that they chased him through the trees to spear him. Thinking to escape punishment, *Pipinjawari* jumped into the sea, and transformed himself into the queen fish. But the other men, also transforming themselves into fish, continued the chase. Even now, on calm days, the aborigines often see *Pipinjawari*, with his broken back-bone now a dorsal fin, jumping out of the water to escape his pursuers.²⁴

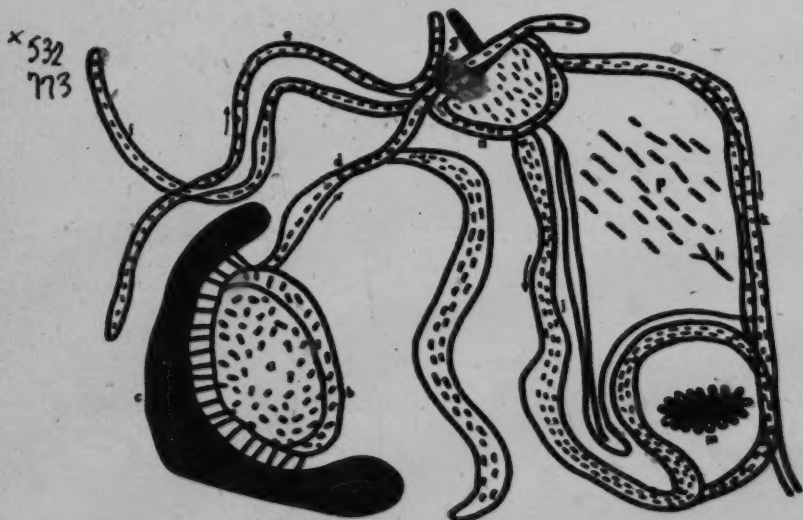


FIG. 3. Spear-throwing Contest of *Pipinjawari*

Fig. 3 is a crayon drawing of *Purukupali's pukumusi* and the spear-throwing contest of the fish-people.

On the lower left is Timbaranapi, where all the mythical people assembled to perform the last *ilanis* before carrying out the final burial rituals.

At Timbaranapi, the men danced in the *milimika*, *a*, and the women on the outskirts at *δ*. The radiating lines on the edge of the *milimika* are many baskets filled with food for the "workers" (Pl. 25B), and crescent *c*, the ground cleared by the "workers". The men travelled by path, *a*, and the

● [171] ²⁴ This is the same fish as the *Tiaris* of the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land (Mountford 1956, p. 349).

THE CREATION PERIOD

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The vertical lines at the bottom of the painting symbolize the rays of the sun-woman as she rises in the east, and the groups of dots throughout the design, the stars, *napalings*, in the night sky. 532^x
773

On Pl. 5C, D, the two concentric circles, *d*, indicate the surface, while *a*, is the *imanta*,⁸¹ or life centre of the sun.

The painting shows a number of different clouds; a thin misty cloud at *b*, heavy rain clouds which temporarily obscure the sun at *h*, *h*, *h*, etc., a mackerel sky at *c* (indicated by the short radiating lines), and cumulus clouds at *j*, *j*.

The colours of sunrise and sunset are indicated by the horizontal bands, *g*, *g*; while the lines of light, which sometimes radiate from the sunset, are at *e*, *e*, etc., and those from the sunrise at *f*, *f*, etc.

Pl. 6A, B, is a bark painting of Wuriupi, the totem place of *Wuriupranala*, the sun-woman. Her body, now a patch of jungle, is at *a*; her head at *n*, and her abdomen at *k*. Her arms are at *b*, *b*; her legs at *c*, *c*; her breasts at *j*, *j*; her ears at *m*, *m*; the chevron scars on her arms and back at *e*, *e*, etc. 532^x
778

The windbreak of her camp, *d*, is a sandy beach at Wuriupi, and the shelter, under which she rested, is a large yam, whose leaves, vine and blossoms, are indicated by symbols, *h*, *h*; *l*, *l*; *v*, *v*, etc. Tracks made by the sun-woman are shown at *x*, *x*; *x*, *x*; red rocks on the beach at *g*, *g*; and black rocks at *f*, *f*.

Pl. 7A, a painting on one side of a *pakamuni* basket, also refers to the sun-woman. 532^x
821

The sun is represented by the black circle in the lower section of the design, while the disc in the centre of the circle is the torch of blazing bark which the sun-woman carries across the sky to provide the world with light and heat. The white, upper disc represents the large thunderclouds which, at the beginning of the wet season, often obscure the sun.⁸² The surrounding concentric circles and the parallel lines across the middle of the design symbolize the colours on the edge of the clouds at sunrise or sunset.

The lighter coloured diagonal lines refer to groups of cirrus clouds, and the darker, to monsoon clouds of the rainy season. The dots are the stars of the night sky.

The vertical black line in the middle of Pl. 7D, is the track across the sky of the sun-woman, *Wuriupranala*. The black disc across the bottom is the sun in the morning; the one immediately above, the sun at midday; the next,

⁸¹ The *imanta* is a universal life essence which permeates all living things, the plants, the creatures and man. It is situated in the solar-plexus of man. This is the same life essence as that of the Pitjandjara tribe of the western deserts of Central Australia (Mountford, 1948, p. 111). [774]
[71]

⁸² When a thundercloud obscures the sun, the aborigines believe that *Andjahi* (fresh water) has taken his wife, *Wuriupranala*, to his camp.

776 ance, with a long black body, short, thick legs and arms, and a pendant abdomen, caused by continuous over-eating.

Pakadrings, with his sister, *Bumerali*, the lightning-woman, her husband, *Kilipatu*, and their many children travel together in the thunderclouds.

776 *Bumerali*, the lightning woman, has flaked stone axes, called *rikas*,⁸²
821 mounted on long crooked handles, which she carries in either hand. With these, while travelling in the clouds with *Pakadrings*, she strikes the ground beneath, destroying the trees and sometimes the aborigines.⁸³ *Bumerali* becomes angry when her children jump from cloud to cloud. The sharp crack of the thunder which immediately follows the lightning flash is the voice of *Bumerali*⁸⁴ reprimanding her children for their disobedience.

Tomituka, *Pakadrings*'s other sister, is the woman of the monsoon rain. At the start of the wet season, the trees and plants become happy when they hear the distant rumblings of *Pakadrings* for they know that *Tomituka* comes with him, bringing rain for their thirsty roots.

x 532 Pl. 100 illustrates the mythical *Pakadrings*, the man of the thunderstorms.
776 The black central oval and the semi-circles at the top and bottom of the
821 painting are the dark-coloured thunderclouds of *Pakadrings*. At *b*, *b*, etc., are white thunderclouds, and *c*, *c*, etc., red-coloured clouds which appear in the sky after a storm has passed. The designs *a*, *a*, etc., indicate the rainbow-women, *Maratji* (p. 154), and the dots on the background, the falling rain.

Pl. 12A, *a*, deals with the lightning woman, *Bumerali*. Her eyes are indicated at *a*, *a*; her breasts at *d*, *d*; her feet at *f*, *f*; her camps at *k*, *k*; and her nose is at *b*.

The crooked handles of her stone axes are at *c*, *c*, and the "road" of the lightning (the flash) is at *e*.

The upper crescent, *g*, is the thundercloud in which *Bumerali* and her family travel; *h*, a yellow cloud which forms after the storm has passed, *s*, *s*, *s*, are stringy-bark trees, and *n*, *n*, other trees killed by *Bumerali*'s axe;

⁸² Some of my informants said that the axes of *Bumerali* were made of a white stone which she had picked up at Moonga Hill, north of Turiturina, western Bathurst Island, where, I was told, there is an outcrop of quartz. Others said she made the axes from a white stone found in the upper world, *Tuniruna*, p. 171.

• [17] ⁸³ There is a widespread belief throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and some of the Indonesian Islands, that the prehistoric stone axes, found by the peasant people, were thunderbolts (Mountford, 1955, p. 1). At Oenpelli (Mountford, 1956, p. 208) a lightning man, *Mameragan*, carries stone axes on his hands and knees. With these axes he strikes the ground. It is of some interest to find the myth of such a widespread belief among the Australian aborigines.

⁸⁴ The aborigines distinguish between the sharp crack of thunder (the voice of *Bumerali*) and the rumble of distant thunder, that of *Pakadrings*.

THE PUKAMUNI CEREMONY

61

I. BELIEFS IN THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

The fear of the spirits of the dead and the desire of the living to propitiate them are the bases for the complicated burial rituals, not only of the Tiwi, but of all Australian tribes. 769
765

The Tiwi spirits of the dead, the *mopaditi*, live in self-contained communities at the various totemic places on Melville and Bathurst Islands. The *mopaditi* have the same appearance as the aboriginal folk, except that their bodies no longer have substance, being but nebulous images of their former selves. 775
[778]

No living person has seen these *mopaditi*, for they are invisible by day, white in the moonlight and black in the darkness. Although, normally, the *mopaditi* travel on the surface of the ground in the same manner as the aborigines, they are able, when crossing a river, or an arm of the sea, to walk on the surface of the water.

In the spirit land, the *mopaditi*, who are eternal, retain their totems (*puksi*), marry spirit women of the correct tribal relationships, and have children who grow to maturity.⁴⁷ They eat the same food as the aborigines, going hungry if the hunting is poor,⁴⁸ and use the same implements and weapons.⁴⁹

At the death of an aboriginal, the *mopaditi* rises out of the chest of the corpse. If the corpse is that of an infant, or a very small child, its *mopaditi* stays in the immediate neighbourhood, sleeping with the bereaved mother every night, but leaving in the morning before she wakes up. This continues until the woman has recovered from her grief.

After some months, the spirit child, now called a *buda-buda*, re-enters the body of its previous mother through her vulva and starts life again as a human being. [842]

On the other hand, if the person has lived for some time, its *mopaditi* stays around the grave, mourning because it has to leave its old companions. But after three days have elapsed, the *mopaditi* calls out "*Nimbungi*" (good-bye), and sets off, unaccompanied,⁵⁰ to the locality where it was born, which, before

⁴⁷ The aborigines are not certain whether the children, like their parents, have eternal life.

⁴⁸ This is unusual; in most of the aboriginal heavens I have heard of, for example, north-eastern Arnhem Land (Mountford, 1956, p. 323), there is ample, easily-gathered food. [171]●

⁴⁹ These days, the *mopaditi* have even the modern wooden canoes, although, up to fifty years ago, their canoes, like those of the living people, were made from a folded sheet of bark. [177]

⁵⁰ Some aborigines believe that the father, or some close relative, comes to the grave and guides the spirit to its birthplace.

THE PUKAMUNI CEREMONY

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Unidentified

The designs on Pl. 287 are the same as those painted on the face of the chief mourner, *Katopi*, at *Waniamperi's* final *putamuni*. I did not ask about their meanings. 302
778

Although I did not learn the meanings of the facial designs on the remaining faces on Pl. 28, it is reasonable to suppose they all referred to some mythological story, probably associated with the totem of the aboriginal who wore them.

7. THE PUKAMUNI DANCES

A number of the dances we saw at the *ilanias* and final *putamuni* rituals belonged exclusively to certain Tiwi totemic groups. They were so constant in form that, in no time, we could recognize the dance and the totem to which it belonged. [794]
765
535

Many of these dances are more strenuous than any belonging to the mainland; some of them, indeed, so strenuous, i.e., the crocodile (Pl. 302), the shark (Pl. 300), or the sea-eagle (Pl. 303), that they seldom lasted more than a minute. [171]●

Although I recorded only fourteen of these totemic dances (illustrated on Pls. 29 and 30), I feel sure that these represent but a small proportion of those performed by the Tiwi. For instance, none of the totemic dances belonging to the dead person would have been performed at the burial rituals we witnessed.

Pl. 29A is the dance of the jabiru, *Tjalasi*, which was performed with such skill and abandon by *Nilituma* at the Bathurst Island *ilania* of *Waniamperi's* *putamuni* ceremony.

Pl. 29B is the dance of the boobook owl, *Purujitini*, who with his wife, the barn-owl, *Pintoma*, organized the second *kulama* ceremony on Turiturina Island, western Bathurst Island. The dancer is indicating the large eyes of the boobook owl.

Pl. 29C is the dance of the blanket-lizard, *Kilpuruni*, who was punished by *Jurumu*, the wedge-tailed eagle, because the former seduced *Jurumu's* wife. The dancer walked around the ceremonial ground with an awkward gait, in imitation of the blanket-lizard's curious method of locomotion.

Pl. 29D pictures the frog-woman, *Kwout-kwout*, who is the mother of the man of the thunderstorms, *Pakadringa*, the woman of the monsoon rain, *Tamituka*, and the lightning woman, *Bumrali*. The frog dance was performed many times at the *ilanias* of *Waniamperi*, the frog being the totem of his father.

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8. THE CEREMONIAL OBJECTS OF THE TIWI

The ceremonial objects of the *pukamuni* ceremony, like the carved and painted burial poles and elaborate facial and body decorations already described, are totally unlike those used by the mainland aborigines.

A series of objects obtained on the 1954 expedition is illustrated on Pls. 31, 32.³⁴

On Pl. 31, A, D, and G, are chest ornaments called *pukabinda*, which are suspended around the neck with a loop of human hair string. Fig. A is an oval ball of the soft wax of the native bee, into which has been pressed a large number of the red and black seeds of a jungle vine. Fig. D, made of several ovals of lawyer vine, is bound together with strips of the same material. The pendant is made of human hair and white cockatoo feathers. The oval opening is too small to pass over the head, therefore this ornament, and similar examples which I saw, were suspended around the neck with string. Fig. G is a flat disc like Fig. D, with lengths of lawyer vine bound together. This disc was coated with wax, and further decorated with red and black jungle seeds.

Pl. 31E and F are ornaments, *palmatjinas*, decorated with red and black seeds, which are pushed up the arm over the elbow.³⁵ Both have been made in the same manner as Fig. D, G.

Pl. 31B is a goose-feather ball, *tokwianga*, worn around the neck or tied around the upper arm. *Wurabuti* (frontispiece) is wearing a *tokwianga*.

These ornaments are made by embedding ends of the downy feathers of the pied goose in a ball of wax. So much work was entailed in making a *tokwianga* that the aborigines were loth to part with them. The *tokwianga* is worn on all ceremonial occasions.

Pl. 31C is a false beard, *baludi*, which was worn at the *ilanas*, the final *pukamuni* (see frontispiece), and the *kulama* rituals. The *baludi* may be pure decoration, or it may replace the beard, which up until comparatively recently was plucked out at both the *pukamuni* and *kulama* rituals.

Fig. H illustrates three cane arm rings, *jairinis*, made from plaited lawyer vine. These were worn on the upper and lower arms of the *pukamuni* men and women, and occasionally by other performers, as decoration. At the end of the burial ceremony the performers take these rings from their arms and leave them on the grave as a present for the spirit of the dead.

³⁴ Spencer, 1928, Pl. XII, Figs. 450-4, illustrates a number of *pukamuni* ornaments he collected in 1911.

³⁵ Several of the men illustrated on Pl. 36a, are wearing these arm ornaments.

THE PUKAMUNI CEREMONY

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elaborately shaped nor decorated, often being covered with no more than a series of dots.¹



FIG. 8. The Burial Poles

Origin of the Pukamuni Poles

At present we have no evidence to show whether the custom of erecting burial poles around the grave in such numbers, not as a memorial, but as a gift to the dead, is confined entirely to the Tiwi tribe, or whether it is used in any other part of the world, and has reached the Tiwi by diffusion. There certainly are no similar burial poles on the Australian continent.

In north-eastern Arnhem Land, some of the decorated log coffins are as high as seven feet.² But the function of those coffins bears no relationship to that of the burial poles of Melville Island, the former being no more than coffins to hold the bones, and the latter, gifts to please the spirit of the dead.

It is possible that, during the long period of isolation from the mainland cultures, the Melville Islanders may have changed coffins of north-eastern Arnhem Land into the burial poles of the Tiwi.

The only examples of burial posts outside of Australia known to me, that are in any way comparable in function to those on Melville Island, are the *malanggan* burial ornaments of New Ireland described by Kramer.³

Methods of Manufacture

Although, at the conclusion of the *pukamuni* rituals, the grave is totally neglected and the poles allowed to decay, the "workers", using steel axes⁴

¹ Although *Tjamalampun* is not fully correct (see Bremer's and Campbell's statement in the early nineteenth century, pp. 107, 108), it indicates that both the poles and their painted decorations have, with the passing of the years, and the acquisition of steel tools, become more complex.

² Mountford, 1916, p. 317.

³ Kramer, 1925.

⁴ The evidence of Bremer, Spencer and the aborigines, suggests that before the advent of metal the only cutting tools owned by the aborigines would have been crude stone axes, and the shells of cockles. It is likely that, under these conditions, the poles would

^x532 Dr. Kenneth Fry, when visiting the islands during 1913, made sketches of
765 the pole shapes of eight *nadinis* and found out the meanings of five of them.
[114] These are reproduced on Fig. 8.

Fig. 8A represents a man carrying a roll of blankets on his back, *a*, being his hat, and *b*, his blankets. Fig. 8B also represents a man, *a*, as before, indicating his hat. On Fig. 8C, *a*, is the mast of a boat; on Fig. 8D, *a*, is the crutch in the boom of a pearling lugger (usually called branches of trees in the 1954 series); and on Fig. 8G, *a* is a window.

Dr. Fry did not find out the meanings of Fig. 8E, F, and H.

[177] The present-day meaning of design, Fig. 8F, which could have applied to
[797] Dr. Fry's example, is somewhat interesting. The aborigines at the Bathurst Island mission are warned of the terrors of their future life if they are not buried "under the cross", i.e., in the mission cemetery.

When I asked the aborigines at Melville Island what was the significance of the cross they had carved on the top of several of their *pukamuni* poles, they explained that it was there purely as a "safety measure", just in case there was something in the mission story.

11. THE CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

● [171] It has been known, for about twenty years, that aboriginal craftsmen, in widely separated places in Northern Australia, but particularly in north-eastern Arnhem Land, have made carved and painted figures in wood.²⁰ It was a surprise, however, to find that the Tiwi people, who appear to have been separated from the mainland cultures for a considerable time, were using similar figures in their burial rituals.

Inquiries revealed that, for some years, one or another of the aboriginal craftsmen, skilled in the carving of *pukamuni* poles with steel tools, and, no doubt, experimenting with new shapes, occasionally made a burial pole in the form of a conventionalized human body (Pl. 39), or smaller human figures (Pls. 40, 41), which were placed on the grave.

I gathered information about three old human-headed burial poles as well as adding to the expedition collection, two recently made poles and six smaller figures.

At the burial, about thirty years ago, of the mother of one of my informants, a "worker", called *Kodo*, made and erected a human-headed burial pole. In 1941, Mr. W. E. Harney saw a well-carved head on a burial

²⁰ Mountford, 1956, p. 413, traces the distribution of the carved wooden figures in Northern Australia and their development at Yirrkalla, from simple human-headed burial poles of Malay origin to carved heads and full-length figures of considerable merit.

776 After many weeks, the *Paramanus* takes the aboriginal to a forest close
 787 to his old camp and releases him, saying, "You're lucky to have been caught
 by a *Paramanus*. From now onward, if you don't tell anyone about me, and
 the things you have seen, I'll be your friend. I'll protect you in a fight; I'll
 chase game toward you so that you'll be known as a good hunter, and be-
 cause I can see into the future, I'll make sure that you do not get into serious
 trouble."

To this, the aboriginal always agrees; but should he divulge the source of
 his good luck, his *Paramanus* guardian, who is always nearby, will either kill
 the aboriginal for his breach of faith or withdraw his protection.

532 Fig. 14 and Fig. 15, are copies of two crayon drawings of the *Paramanus*,
 776 one (Fig. 15) being the work of a younger sophisticated aboriginal.

Fig. 14 deals with a *Paramanus* and his family at home in a termite
 mound. The central figure, *a*, is a conventionalized representation of a
Paramanus. His face and head are at *b*, the radiating lines within the two
 circles indicating his hair. His feet are at *c*, and shoulder blades at *d*, *e*. I did
 not gather the interpretation of symbols *d*, *e*, but they may be his arms. The
 outer concentric circles are the walls of the termite mound and discs, *f*, *g*,
 the entrances to the *Paramanus*'s home.

The *Paramanus* is shown again at *f*, in a more naturalistic form, the line
 across the fingers of the left hand indicating his long finger-nails. The
 interpretation of design *g*, was somewhat confused, some informants saying
 that it was a *Paramanus* woman, others that it was a turtle caught for food.

In the upper left is the son, *j*, and the daughter, *k*, of the *Paramanus*.
 In these drawings the various parts of the body are separated⁶⁶ and have no
 relation to normal position or appearance.

The head of the son is at *p*, the upper radiating lines being his hair; *q*, is
 his mouth, the upper lines symbolizing the teeth; *r*, *s*, are two goose-feather
 balls, and *t*, *u*, his feet. The lines *v*, *v*, indicate his ribs.

On the right is the *Paramanus*'s daughter. Her eyes are at *n*, *n*; her eye-
 brows at *m*, *m*; breasts at *l*, *l*, and her feet at *o*. The chevrons on either side
 of her body indicate her ribs. The cooking hearths of the *Paramanus* are at
x, *y*, *y*; piles of rocks at *u*, *u*, *u*; and a jungle is at *w*.

In the middle of Fig. 15 is a *Paramanus* with a goose-feather ball, *ak-
 wianga*, *b*, around his neck, and on the lower right at *a*, his camp in the
 middle of a large antihill. Within the camp are many foods and weapons; *c*,

• [70]

⁶⁶ The separation of the parts of the body is not unusual in aboriginal art, Mountford,
 1937, Fig. 2, illustrates a crayon drawing of the Ngudjara tribe of the western Austra-
 lian deserts, where these characteristics are present.

4. THE SEA-DOGS, THE WANKUIS

773 A fragment of a myth tells of how, at the close of the creation period, a mythical man, called *Kirinus*, assembled all the dogs and asked them whether they would prefer to live on the land or in the sea. The present-day dingoes, the *Kirjinas*, chose the land, and others, the sea-dogs, *Wankuis*, the sand-banks in the sea.

776 The home of one group of the sea-dogs is a long sand-bar on the eastern side of the entrance to Snake Bay, about a mile from the expedition camp, over which, except at the spring tides, the waves break continuously.

[823] The aborigines look on the breaking waves as the wagging tails of the *Wankuis*.

When the tide is out in the day-time and the sandbank exposed and dry, the sea-dogs, to escape being seen go to their camps under the sand.

When it is dark, the *Wankuis* leave their watery home, come on shore and make their camps in low caves at the base of a cliff at Snake Bay (Pl. 47a). While there, the *Wankuis* capture the sea-foods of the shallow waters, sting-rays, shell-fish and crabs. The aborigines claim that on the still nights they often hear the *Wankuis* barking.

In the shallow waters of a sandbar near Cape Fourcroy, the aborigines frequently see another kind of *Wankui* which walks on three legs, waving the fourth in the air.

4532 Pl. 47D pictures the *Wankuis* at the sandbar in Snake Bay. In the centre, with many tears, is the mother surrounded by her twelve sons. It is significant
776 that there was no mention of the father.

5. THE RAINBOW, MARATJI

● 171 A belief in a mythical serpent-like creature, which is associated with, or is, the rainbow, and is dangerous to strangers, but not to the local inhabitants, occupies an important place, not only in the mythology of the Australian aborigines, but in the mythologies of people in many parts of the world. These mythical creatures are usually highly-coloured (like the rainbow), of huge size and have both mane and beard.
776
[821]

I have traced these mythical creatures, in their various forms, from the River Murray in South Australia, through Central Australia to Arnhem Land. In the western deserts of Central Australia, Mountford, 1948, p. 138, writes, "The snake (*wonambi*) is a huge, many-coloured creature with a mane and a beard. It is feared . . . because it attacks all strangers who approach
[779]

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the water in which it lives, usually calling with a deep booming note. The rainbow serpent . . . is related . . . to water, rainbow . . ." The rainbow-serpent myth is widespread throughout Arnhem Land. At Oenpelli (Mountford, 1956, p. 210), "mythical serpents live in deep waterholes. . . . The aborigines are . . . afraid of these mythical creatures for should anyone interfere with their . . . home, the serpents, particularly *Ngaloir*, will make their waterholes overflow and drown everyone. The rainbow-serpent woman, *Narawa*, of the Liverpool River area . . . destroys all aborigines who approach her home."

In north-eastern Arnhem Land (Mountford, 1956, p. 462; Warner, 1937, p. 541) the rainbow-serpents live, in one form or another in most of the important water-holes; they are associated with water, the rainbow, lightning, and thunder. Again these serpents are usually highly coloured (like the rainbow), and have a mane and beard. The aborigines claim that they are dangerous to all strangers who approach their waterholes, and even to local aborigines who do not perform the proper rituals before drinking. On Groote Eylandt (Mountford, 1956, p. 75), however, it is a lizard, the gekko, *Ipilja-ipilja*, which takes the place of the rainbow-serpent. It is highly coloured, about one hundred feet in length, has long hair on its head and whiskers on its lower jaw. It lives in a swamp, called Numarika, on south-western Groote Eylandt. Should anyone drink from this swamp, they will surely die. *Ipilja-ipilja* is associated with thunder, thunderstorms, and rain, but not, as far as I could ascertain, with the rainbow.

The lizard-like *Marajis* of Melville and Bathurst Islands⁴⁷ have many of the characteristics of the gekko, *Ipilja-ipilja* of Groote Eylandt⁴⁸ as well as the rainbow serpents of the Central Australian deserts, and Oenpelli, in Arnhem Land.

The *Marajis* are highly coloured lizards, the males being up to one hundred yards in length, with horns on their heads instead of hair, and long projecting jaws in the place of beards.

Should any unauthorized person interfere with their waterholes, the *Marajis* become annoyed. They roar loudly, make the water bubble up (like the Oenpelli serpent, Mountford, 1956, p. 210), and send a waterspout into the air which, falling as torrential rain, floods the countryside. One of the *Marajis* then changes himself into the rainbow and travels across the land seeking to injure the offender or anyone else in its path.

⁴⁷ Harvey and Elkin, 1942, p. 231, refers to *Marajis* as the rainbow snake.

⁴⁸ It is of interest to note that on isolated places, such as Groote Eylandt and Melville Island, these mythical creatures resemble lizards, and on the Australian mainland, and in most other places in the world, they take the form of snakes.

776 The *Marajis* belong to the totem of *Andjahil* (fresh water), in common with *Pakadrings* (thunderstorms), *Tominuka* (monsoon rain) and *Bumerali* (lightning). They are mortal creatures who die and disintegrate like everything else (Pl. 480).

[123] I collected bark paintings and crayon drawings of a number of *Marajis*, living with their wives and families in three lagoons on Melville and Bathurst Islands, i.e., Maundu, southern Bathurst Island, and Kulimbini, north-western, and Marajiana, northern Melville Island.

776 The *Marajis* of Melville and Bathurst Islands are not always of the same temperament. For instance, the *Marajis* who live at 'Kulimbini' (Pl. 48A) are so dangerous that should any aboriginal dare approach their water, they will steal his *imunka* (spirit), and he will die.

Although the *Marajis* of Maundu (Pl. 48C) are feared, it is possible, if certain rituals are performed, for even a stranger to drink the water without harm; while those who live in the Marajiana lagoon at Goose Creek, are looked upon by the aborigines as "properly quiet fellow".⁴⁰

776 The rainbow, as a *Maraji*, however, is universally feared, the aborigines believing that the primary bow is the *imunka* (spirit) of a male, and the secondary bow, that of a female *Maraji*.

821 If a rainbow goes too near an aboriginal camp, the occupants will quickly [1789] build up their fire⁴¹ and call out to frighten *Maraji* away, but should he come too close, the people will feel ill and break out into a cold perspiration. If an aboriginal is overtaken by a rainbow,⁴² it will kill him by taking his spirit.

Should some aboriginal be so foolish as to throw a spear at a rainbow and injure it, the *Marajis* would destroy the whole country and the people who live in it.

776 Two heavy wind-storms, which occurred whilst the expedition was at Melville Island, were supposed to have been caused by angry *Marajis*. The 821 first was due to some foolish aboriginal who broke a *kulama* ceremony taboo 648 (p. 142) by throwing some of the termite mound from the *kulama* oven into the sea. The second happened when a *pukamuni* pole, taken from a grave by one of the senior officers of the Native Affairs Branch, was being loaded on a boat for transport to Darwin.

The aborigines explained that as these poles are a gift from the living to

⁴⁰ Further research will no doubt reveal other waterholes on Melville and Bathurst Islands, inhabited by *Marajis*.

• [171] ⁴¹ This would suggest that *Maraji*, like the *Wanambi* of the Central Australian deserts, is afraid of fire (Mountford, 1948, p. 138).

⁴² These conditions are, of course, impossible because the rainbow is always several feet from the observer.

CHAPTER VI

The Secular Bark Paintings

- x532 THE designs used by the Tiwi on many of their secular bark paintings are strongly influenced by those employed in decorating the poles and the large bark baskets of the *pukamuni* ceremony. For instance, all of the patterns on Pl. 49 would be similar to those used on a burial pole, while a number of the paintings of the totemic places, for example, those shown on Pl. 10, have the same fundamental designs as those on the *pukamuni* baskets.

- [171] As mentioned previously, one of the remarkable aspects of the art of the Tiwi is that it is highly formalized, whereas, on the mainland, only fourteen miles away, across the dangerous waterway of Dundas Strait, the art is fully representational. This difference in the art forms of the Tiwi and that of the aborigines of the adjacent mainland is an excellent example of how a natural barrier can isolate one culture from the influence of another.

I. TOPOGRAPHY

- x532 The obverse side of a large *pukamuni* basket (Pl. 49A, a), illustrates the trees and shrubs of Cape Van Diemen, arranged in a decorative pattern, and on 133 the reverse side (Pl. 49C, b), the natural features at Imilu, in the same 137 locality.

Cape Van Diemen

On Pl. 49A, a, the series of rectangles at a, on the top of the basket, represent a forest of stringybark trees, and the groups of vertical and sloping lines at k, k (bottom), many bloodwood trees. The vertical lines, f, f, etc., are also stringybarks and the horizontal lines, c, c, etc., bloodwood trees.

The many circles, d, d, etc., are *pukamuni* arm ornaments, *palmajinas* (Pl. 31E, r); the cross-hatching in rectangles e, e, etc. (upper) are spider webs, and the dots at h, h, etc., black and red seeds of a jungle vine lying on the ground.

Imilu

On Pl. 49C, b, the circles a, a, etc., in the border, represent the many hives of wild bees in the trees at Imilu, and the intervening panels, f, f, etc., red

THE SECULAR BARK PAINTINGS

165

grove swamps, and the dotted panels, *b*, *d*, *f*, *h*, and *k*, to the seaweed growing on the sea-bottom. 532^x

3. THE FAUNA

The Sea-Creatures

Two bark paintings, 55A, a, and 56A, a, depict the creatures who live on the floor of the ocean. 532^x

On Pl. 55A, a, design *a*, represents a shark; design *b*, and *f*, are large sea-snakes; *c*, is a smaller species, and *g*, another snake that lives in the mangrove swamps. At *e*, is a saw-fish; at *d*, a porpoise, and at *h*, a sea-slug or *beche-de-mer*. Designs, *m*, *m*, etc., are shells; and *l*, boulders on the sea-bottom; *i*, is a creek in the mangrove swamp, and *j*, a sandbank in Snake Bay. 136

Pl. 56A, a, also deals with the creatures of the sea. In the central section panels *a*, *a*, are star-fish; panel *b*, refers to an octopus; *c*, to pearl-shell oysters; *d*, to a crab, and *e*, to a turtle. The cross-hatching, throughout the design, is symbolical of the scale pattern on a crocodile skin, and the two transverse white bands are the creature's intestines.

The Snakes

Two bark paintings, Pl. 57D and Pl. 55K, depict the snakes of Melville and Bathurst Islands.

Pl. 57D pictures, in conventionalized form, a number of sea-snakes, some of which were poisonous and much feared.

Pl. 55K illustrates a number of snakes that live in the forest and jungle adjacent to the expedition.

Reading from the right, *a*, is the venomous bush snake, *jaruwini*; *b*, a copper-coloured non-venomous snake, *ilingu*; *c*, a venomous snake, *buliar-ingu*, that lives in the mangrove swamps, and *d*, a harmless water-snake, *patinga*. The short, more or less horizontal lines at *f*, *f*, are tall eucalypts in the forest and the dots, the grass at their base. [137]

A Goanna

Pl. 57C is a simple X-ray bark painting of a goanna, on which the backbone and ribs are indicated. This is the only example of that curious art form which I saw on Melville Island, although on the adjacent mainland, the X-ray art has reached its highest development. [171]

The Sea-going Turtles

Pl. 55C pictures the sea-going turtles. The central design represents the

CHAPTER VII

The Astronomy of the Tiwi

171 THE Tiwi's knowledge of the night sky does not appear to be as extensive as
 773 that of the aborigines of the adjoining Arnhem Land (Mountford, 1956,
 Part 6).

821 Although myths relating to the sun, the moon, the Milky Way, the stars
 and Orion and the Pleiades were often told, I was unable to find any relating
 to the Southern Cross, Scorpio, the Magellan Clouds and other constellations
 well-known to the aborigines of Arnhem Land.

The Universe

821 The Tiwi believe that the earth is flat, and so limited in area that, if they
 travel far from the shores of their tribal country, they would fall over the
 edge. As evidence of this they point out that, in the morning they can see
Wuriupranala, the sun-woman, rise above the eastern rim and, at the end of
 the day, disappear beneath the western rim of the world.

The earth, too, is of limited thickness, the aborigines believing that, if they
 dug a hole sufficiently deep they would reach the lower world, *Ilara*.⁶⁶

772 The aboriginal universe of the Tiwi consists of four levels, (a) a subter-
 ranean world, *Ilara*, (b) the earth on which the aborigines live, (c), the sky-
 land, *Juwuku*, and (d) an upper world, *Tuniruna*.

On *Ilara* where it is always dark, there are two high stony ranges with a
 valley between. It is along this valley that the sun-woman, *Wuriupranala*,
 776 and according to some informants, the moon-man, *Tjapara*, guided only by
 821 the light of their glowing torch of bark, travel each day from the western
 horizon to their homes in the east. As there are no plants or animals on *Ilara*,
 the celestial travellers cannot gather any food during their underground
 journey, although they can quench their thirst at a stream which flows from
 the top of one of the high mountains.

During the wet season, *Pakadringa*, the man of the thunderstorms;
Tomituka, the woman of the monsoon rains; *Bumerali*, the lightning woman,
 with her husband and her many children, make their home on the sky-land,

[171] ⁶⁶ I did not find a belief among the Melville Islanders, like that of the aborigines of
 Groote Eylandt, that the earth was a thin crust resting on the top of the water. (Mount-
 ford, 1956, p. 67.)

824 This belief probably accounts for the fact that I did not hear any songs chanted, or witness any ceremonies (with the possible exception of the *kulama*) that would bring about a plentiful supply of food. Nor did I hear of any increase centres such as I saw on Groote Eylandt, (Mountford, 1956, pp. 84, 91), and were seen by Spencer and Gillen (1899, p. 166), and myself (1948, p. 145) in Central Australia.

The Sky and the Upper World

*532. Pl. 63D is a bark painting of the sky and the upper world, Tuniruna. 821 The central series of concentric circles represent an unidentified planet, one of the wives of *Tjapara*, the moon-man; the designs, *d, d, d, d*, are some of the stars, *Tapalinga*; *f, f*, are the plum trees (already mentioned), which grow in the upper world. The radiating lines are the limbs of the plum trees.

The inner square, *b*, is the upper world, Tuniruna, the chevron patterns are the clouds in the sky, and the outer square the surface of the earth.

The groups of dots, throughout the painting, are the spirit fruits of the many trees at Tuniruna, which (as mentioned earlier), fall from the upper world to the earth beneath.

The Sun-woman, Wuriupranala

773 A myth, belonging to the early creation period, tells of how *Wuriupranala*, one of the first women, was given the task of keeping alight a torch of blazing 776 bark. When, after the *pukamuni* of *Purukupali*, the men and women changed themselves into creatures and plants, *Wuriupranala* became the sun-woman, who travels daily across the sky, her torch of blazing bark providing the world with light and heat.

776 However, before *Wuriupranala* sets out from the eastern horizon, she 821 powders her body with red ochre, the dust of which flying into the air, reddens the clouds of early morning.

When she reaches the western horizon, *Wuriupranala* again powders her body (this accounts for the brilliant sunsets), extinguishes her torch and rests for a while beside a celestial lagoon, Kumpinulu, before returning to the east along a path through the subterranean world, Ilara. On this journey, she is guided only by the light from the glowing end of her smouldering torch.²⁰

*532 Three bark paintings, Pl. 60A, B, Pl. 61A, B, and Pl. 63A, B, deal with the myth of the sun-woman.

773 The designs on one side of a *pukamuni* basket, Pl. 61A, B, picture the sun, 776 moon and stars.

821 ²⁰ See pp. 35, 40 for more details of the sun-woman.

ASTRONOMY

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Orion and the Pleiades

Pl. 6a illustrates the myth of Orion and the Pleiades. In the astronomical myth Orion, *a*, is a pack of dingoes, called *daiimini*, who are for ever chasing the Pleiades, *b*, a group of wallabies, *karaku*. 532^x
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821
[773]

The black vertical lines on either side of *a*, and *b*, starless spaces in the Milky Way, *Maludaianini*, are the trunks of celestial bloodwood trees; the short lines at right-angles, their limbs, and the dots on the background, the many spider-webs on their branches.

The large outer ovals, unidentified parts of the Milky Way, are patches of bare and grass-covered land of the sky, and the eight discs on the insides of the ovals, some of the larger stars.

Discussion

There is a wide difference between the astronomical myths of Melville Island and those of the adjacent mainland. Nor do the Melville Islanders have such a detailed knowledge of the night sky as the tribes of Arnhem Land (Mountford, 1956, p. 479). This fact suggests, as do other aspects of the culture, that the natives of Melville Island have been isolated from the mainland cultures for a long time. 171
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The effects of this isolation are most evident in two of the sky myths, i.e., the Milky Way, and the constellations of Orion and the Pleiades.

Throughout Australia, with few exceptions, the Milky Way is looked upon as a celestial river, along which the sky people travel in their canoes, and gather their food (Mountford, 1956, p. 491). No trace of this widespread myth is present on Melville Island, the Milky Way being a multitude of caterpillar men, the *Maludaianini*.

Similarly with Orion and the Pleiades. In the Australian mainland myths, Orion is a man or men, and the Pleiades, a group of women, more often than not, the wives of the men of Orion.

In the place of this widespread myth, the Melville Islanders look upon the stars of Orion as a group of dingoes chasing the Pleiades, a mob of wallabies.

Even in the myth of the moon-man, there is a reversal of the adjacent Arnhem Land beliefs. In Arnhem Land, it was the moon who brought death to the world (Mountford, 1956, p. 495; Warner, 1937, p. 523). On Melville Island, it is the moon-man, *Tjapara*, who tries to stop *Purukupali* from imposing death on all living creatures.

CONCLUSION

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● 171 This study of the Tiwi tribe of Melville and Bathurst Islands, made through the medium of their art, their myths, and their ceremonies, reveals wide differences between many phases of their cultural life and that of the aborigines who live on the adjacent mainland. These differences are probably the result of isolation caused by the dangerous tideways which have separated the two peoples from each other for an unknown, but probably lengthy, period.

[174] Though both are of aboriginal stock, and from the same cultural background (as indicated by basically similar creation stories), this isolation has allowed the two groups to develop independently. It may well be that the beliefs of the Tiwi represent those of one of the aboriginal migrations to Australia, and has remained somewhat constant, while the mainland people, enriched by occasional waves of new ideas, have developed a much more varied philosophical and cultural life.

The main differences between the two cultures can be summarized as follows:

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x 532 (a) The art forms of the Melville and Bathurst Islands are so highly formalized that they seldom resemble the objects they represent. In contrast, the art of their neighbours on the mainland, the Arnhem Land aborigines, is not only entirely representational, but is probably a more vital and colourful art than exists in any other part of the continent.

171
765 (b) Compared with the rest of Australia, too, the ceremonies of the Tiwi are particularly limited, there being only two in the whole culture. The major ceremony, that of burial, is by far the more elaborate. It extends over several months, involves the co-operation of many people, and provides the tribe with a complete outlet for their grief, their music, their dancing, and their art. This ceremony is without parallel in Australia, and, so far as we know, elsewhere in the world.

171
88 The other ceremony, the Kulama, is a blending of several rituals: the initiation of men and women into the social grades of the tribe; the ceremony of preparing a poisonous yam for food,⁶⁶ which ceremony the participants believe prolongs the wet season; and the airing of grievances

[174] ⁶⁶ Spencer, 1928, p. 661, speaks of the Kulama as a food increase ritual. It is probable that Spencer was only expressing an opinion, having previously carried out research in Central Australia where increase rituals are both numerous and important. I did not obtain any evidence which indicated that food increase rituals were carried out by the Tiwi.

CONCLUSION

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without quarrels. Again, there is no comparable ceremony on the mainland.

(c) Throughout the mainland of Australia, women occupy a low social status within the tribal framework. They are rigidly excluded from almost all aspects of the ceremonial life, and of initiation; they also are ignorant of most of the creation myths, the procedures of the secret rituals, and even the existence of the sacred objects.

These restrictions do not apply to the women of the Tiwi. They are initiated, side by side, with the men, and take similar though not identical parts in the ritual. They also participate in all phases of the burial ceremonies, at which they usually perform their own dance, the *Amburu*, but occasionally take part in dances which are performed by the men (Pl. 25c). A woman even has the right to cut and paint a burial pole, if her husband, who has been allotted the task, is unavoidably absent. In short, I was unable to find any aspect of Tiwi ceremonial life in which women could not take their part if they so desired.

(d) Although the creation story of the Tiwi is basically similar to that of the aborigines elsewhere in Australia, it is not as elaborate as, say, the travels of the Wawalik and the Djungkao Sisters of Arnhem Land, recorded by Warner (1937), nor those of Central Australia, described by Spencer and Gillen (1899). I did not witness, nor did I hear of any specific Tiwi ceremony that commemorated the myths of the creation period. The dances in the *ilaniar*, and the final rituals of the burial ceremony, usually referred to the various creatures or the elements, but seldom to an incident in the creation myth.

(e) There are also important differences between many of the myths of the Tiwi and those of the mainland people. For instance, in northern Australia, it is the moon man who brings death to mankind; in Melville Island the same moon-man endeavours to prevent death from coming to the world. I have already pointed out other wide differences between the astronomical myths of the mainland and those of the adjacent Melville Island.

On Arnhem Land, in fact, as far as South Australia, the aborigines, almost without exception, believe that their spirits go to a distant land not visible to human eyes, where there is continuous good weather, and an abundance of easily gathered food.

On the other hand, the Tiwi believe that at the close of the burial rituals the spirits of their dead return to their separate birthplaces, where each one hunts for food in the same manner as its living relatives, suffering, as they do, from exposure if the weather is inclement, and from hunger if the food supplies are limited.

- 411 (f) The aborigines of Melville and Bathurst Islands have a particularly
 412 limited material culture. They have only double-ended, or simple wooden
 barbed spears, which they throw by hand as one would throw a javelin.
 This form of propulsion contrasts strongly with the mainland, where the
 use of the spear-thrower is universal. Nor do the Tiwi use any small mounted
 stone tools. Before the advent of steel, their only cutting tool was a cockle-
 shell, held in the hand. It is likely that until about fifty years ago, until Joe
 [177] Cooper brought the mainland aborigines, with their polished stone axes, to
 Melville Island, the Tiwi possessed only a crudely flaked stone axe, mounted
 in a length of split wood with the gum of a eucalyptus tree. In addition, all of
 [415] the Tiwi carrying utensils are made of bark, because the Islanders lack the
 [285] knowledge of any form of basketry or of the netting techniques.

105 It is evident, then, that within the range of the research I was able to
 171 undertake, there are many differences between the culture of the Tiwi and
 that of the aborigines of the nearby mainland. There is little doubt that
 Miss Goodale's research, when published, will reveal further dissimilarities."

123 My research, however, must be considered only as a preliminary study,
 within the limits of the subjects enumerated. Lack of transport prevented
 me from visiting any of the totemic sites, and limited time from investiga-
 ting more fully other aspects of their beliefs.

It is my sincere hope that this study will be continued by another eth-
 nologist before civilization has distorted or destroyed the interesting cultural
 life of the Tiwi.

- [114] "Since the writing of this book, Chaseling has referred (1917, p. 170) to a female
 173 ancestor (unnamed) who created much of the mainland side of Dundas Strait. This
 information would suggest that Melville Island and the adjacent mainland are more
 closely linked mythologically, and perhaps culturally, than the evidence in this book
 suggests. Further research on this subject will be awaited with interest.

170

THE TIWI-OF MELVILLE AND BATHURST ISLANDS

184 they speak one language and they regard a certain defined area of land as
619 belonging to them.

[171] The Australian tribe is a collection of persons who speak a common
619 language, or what they themselves regard as such, practise the same
101 customs, and normally have a name by which they distinguish themselves
and their language. The inhabitants of Melville and Bathurst Islands
are therefore to be regarded as a single tribe, but it is difficult to find
a true tribal name. The Uwaidja of Port Essington call the Melville
Islanders, *Wuyuk*, as Spencer notes, but the Melville Islanders scarcely
regard it as necessary to call themselves anything. The local group of
186 which a man is conscious of being a member is the horde, and until the
648 advent of the white man, the Melville Islander was not aware that any
101 other people existed except themselves. It was impossible and also quite
unnecessary for them to visit the mainland in their bark canoes more

[72] especially as the coast around Cape Don and Cape Hotham, dimly seen
on clear days, was regarded as the abode of departed souls, *Tibambinumi*,
the home of the dead. It was apparently just as impossible or unnecessary,
or perhaps danger was the chief deterrent, for the Uwaidja or the Larakia
to visit Melville Island.

The result was that the people, with no contact with people not of
their own tribe, did not really need a tribal name, and very seldom used
the word *Tiwi*, which is the only one that can be regarded as the name of
the tribe.

101 *Tiwi* is a word that is known and but seldom used. Some of the
younger men were in fact surprised and interested when they heard the old
men using it in response to my enquiries. There is no question of
secrecy or tabu about it. In common everyday use are the words *tini*,
meaning a man of one of the Melville or Bathurst Island hordes, *i.e.*, a male
member of the *Tiwi*, and *tiga* meaning a female member of the tribe.
Tiwi is the plural form of *tini* and *tiga*. It is often said by informants
that *tini* means a man, and *tiga* a woman, irrespective of colour or race, but
in point of fact these words are only used as applying to members of the
Tiwi, and some other word would be used in referring to a white man, or a
Larakia or Uwaidja.

101 Objection may be made to the adoption as the tribal name of these
619 people of a word that theoretically at any rate seems simply "men" in the
ordinary language. But in point of fact the word is never used except

PERSONAL NAMES AMONG THE TIWI¹

By C. W. M. HART

- (171) THE Tiwi, who inhabit Melville and Bathurst Islands in North Australia, are in many respects unlike the other Australian peoples. So little is known, however, about the subject of personal names among Australian tribes that it is impossible to say whether in this respect also (21) they are atypical. Among the Tiwi at any rate personal names and the customs attaching to them play a very important part in the life of the tribe, and in this paper an attempt is made to describe this element of their culture and to explain it.

Every member of the Tiwi has not one name but many, each of which belongs to him or her alone and each having an equal validity as a term of address or of description, though naturally some are used more frequently than others. This is to say, although a man with five different names may be addressed or referred to by any one of those five names, nevertheless the normal thing is for one name to be much more generally used than any of the others, it being for a native, as for us, much easier to think of a person by a single name than by several.

- 553
602 The multiplicity of names is accounted for by the fact that quite a number of the relatives have the right to bestow names upon a new-born child and a certain proportion of them will always exercise that right. The father may always bestow names upon his own children, and the father's brothers, who are of course the classificatory fathers of the child, have the same power. The mother's brothers may also bestow names upon a child, should they so desire, and less frequently children will be found bearing names given to them by the older men of their own totem clan, that is not only the mother's brothers but also other

[122] ¹ This paper, which was presented to Section F, Anthropology, of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science at the Brisbane Meeting, May 1930, contains part of the results of research carried out in 1928 and 1929 as Science Research Scholar of Sydney University, and with the aid of a grant from the Australian National Research Council.

NOTES ON THE NATIVES OF BATHURST ISLAND, NORTH AUSTRALIA.

BY HERBERT BASEDOW, M.D., M.A., B.Sc., F.G.S., etc.

WITH PLATES VII-XX.

Local Correspondent of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London, and Honorary
Fellow of the Anthropological Society, Göttingen; late Chief Medical Inspector
and Chief Protector of Aborigines in the Northern Territory of Australia.

INTRODUCTION.

IN August of last year (1911), I visited Bathurst Island to inspect the natives on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. Accompanied by one of my inspectors (Mr. J. H. Kelly) and a crew consisting of a Chinaman, a Manilaman, and three natives of the Larrekiya Tribe,¹ I left Port Darwin at eleven o'clock in the evening and entered Apsley Strait early the next morning. We spent nine days in the examination of the island, entering the numerous salt-water arms and rivers, effecting a landing wherever possible and traversing the island on foot. Landing was, in most places, difficult on account of the thick growth of mangroves that fringes the island on the east. It had been my intention to circumnavigate the island, but a heavy monsoonal gale prevented us from even making the attempt in the small motor-craft at our disposal. I therefore decided to return *via* Apsley Strait and inspect part of Melville Island.

The plates included in this paper are all reproductions of my original photographs and coloured drawings.

Condition of Natives.

I estimate the population of the island to be about 500. Their isolation and, no doubt in a measure also, their reputation as being cannibalistic and treacherous in their habits, have guarded their primitive condition to the present day.² Before

¹ *Vide Trusts. Roy. Soc. of S. Australia*, vol. xxi, 1907, p. 1.

² Compare the statement:—

"Melville Island, about 30 miles north of Port Darwin, is inhabited by a tribe of which very little is known. They do not circumcize, and speak a different language from those on the mainland. They are represented as a very strong and powerful race."

"Before the arrival of the Hon. B. T. Finnis at Escape Cliffs in 1804, the Melville Island natives occasionally visited the mainland for the purpose of stealing lubras, in which they invariably succeeded; but they have not done so since. This tribe is of a very hostile nature, and on several occasions have attacked Europeans visiting the island. Their canoes and weapons are similar to those on the mainland." P. Foelsche: "Notes on the Aborigines of North Australia," *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. v, 1882, p. 17.

BEFORE

the advent of the buffalo-hunters, few white men had visited the islands since the early days of the naval settlement at Fort Dundas, established by Sir Gordon Bremer in 1824, but abandoned four years later. Malays and Japanese pearl-ers have been in the habit of taking in water from either of the islands and have frequently come into disastrous conflict with the natives. It is perhaps also on account of their isolation from civilization that I found the blacks comparatively free from any serious disease. Apart from the various minor ailments such as traumatic lesions and their after-effects, cataracts and keratitis, a few congenital deformities and such like, only a few cases of tertiary syphilis came under my notice.

A young gin was suffering from a disease of the hip, apparently chronic, but she was too timid to permit me to make an examination. They are on the whole a healthy, sturdy people of moderate stature, with a good muscular development and a square, big thorax. The characteristics are Australoid and yet they present certain insular peculiarities.

The Head.

The forehead is low, with a marked supraorbital development; the face somewhat depressed and the lower jaw strong. The eyes are sunken and the nose is small. The wavy black hair of some of the males was worked up into numerous small, cylindrical, pendant masses with clay and ochre.¹ This, so far as I could ascertain, designated mourning. Others had besmeared their hair with ochre. The hairs on the upper lip are pulled out. The growth of the beard of the men varies, but is, on an average, good.

The natives of either island do not practise the knocking out of one or two incisors as they do on the mainland. Major Campbell,² however, reports having observed the custom on Melville Island.

The face is painted symmetrically with differently coloured ochres, charcoal, and pipeclay, in various degrees of complexity (Fig. 1). A few of the simpler designs might be described briefly:—*Case* (1): The whole surface of the face blackened with charcoal. *Case* (2): The nose red and the rest of the face charcoal-black. *Case* (3): Face (including the shaven upper lip and upper part of chin) charcoal-

¹ Cf. J. MacGillivray, *Narrative Voyage H.M.S. "Rattlesnake,"* London, 1852, vol. ii, p. 13: "The characteristic mode of dressing the hair among the Torres Strait Islanders is to have it twisted up into long pipe-like ringlets, and wigs in imitation of this are also worn"; and again, "at Cape York I have at times for a week together seen all the men and lads with the hair twisted into little strands well daubed over with red ochre and turtle fat."

Also P. P. King, *Survey of the Intertropical Coasts of Australia*, 1837, vol. i, p. 114: "The men were more muscular and better formed than any we have before seen, they were daubed over with a yellow pigment which was the colour of the neighbouring cliff (Luxmore Head on Melville Island); their hair was long and curly and appeared to be clotted with a whitish paint."

² *Journ. Geogr. Society*, London, 1834, vol. iv, p. 153. Cf. also H. Klaatsch: *Rep. Austr. Assoc. Adv. Science*, 1907, vol. xi, p. 591.

302 black; ears, red; hair and beard on lower part of chin, yellow. Case (4): Lower half of face from below the eyes to the chin, yellow, excepting the lips and the immediate surrounding, which are red; the upper half of face divided vertically in a median line, the left segment being black and the right red. Case (5): A broad, horizontal band of black extends across the forehead and the eyes; beneath this, the whole face is yellow, excepting (as in the previous case) the nose and lips, which are red. Case (6): A broad horizontal band of black across the forehead; beneath this, the whole surface from the eyes to the level of the nostrils, yellow; the remaining portion including the lips and chin, red. Case (7): The crown of the head and hair, red, the forehead yellow; a black horizontal band across the eyes, below which the whole surface is yellow, excepting the nose and lips (as in previous cases), which are red. More complicated patterns are better understood by referring to the sketches.

Body Scars.

304 [10] A type of cosmetic body-scars is prevalent on the island, which is unique and different from the system found on the mainland. The production of this permanent ornamentation is, as elsewhere, dependent on the formation of an elevated cicatrix. This is done by cutting the skin and artificially inducing a prolific granulation by

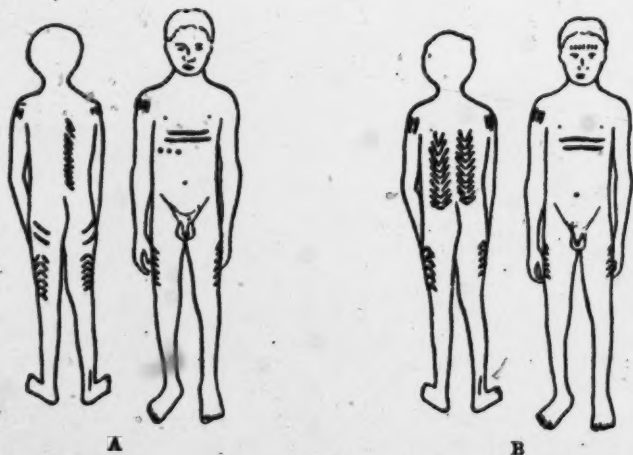


FIG. 2.

keeping the edges of the wound apart with foreign matter, such as ochre and ashes.

[17] On the mainland we find such cicatrices in the form of horizontally or vertically disposed parallel ridges on various parts of the body. Although to a small extent such are also found on Bathurst Island, the characteristic pattern there is one made in direct imitation of an object of nature, namely, the frond of the samia palm (*Cycas media*). The former simple type of cicatrices, consisting of two to five,

- 304 In a few instances, a horizontal row of small circular scars was noticed beneath the cicatrices of the chest, extending from the axillar to the sternal-line, on one half of the body only. They appeared to have been burned into the skin by the heated end of a fire-stick¹ (vide Fig. 2, A).

Circumcision not practised.

- 304 Circumcision is not, as elsewhere in Australia, one of the attendant mutilations during the ceremonies of initiation, at the age of puberty. No cases were noted either on Bathurst or Melville Island. In this respect the Islanders resemble the fast disappearing Larrekiyas of the Port Darwin district and certain other tribes of Cape York and the adjoining islands.²
- 302 The pubic hairs are removed by "pulling them out" with the hand in the same way as the upper lip is cleared of its growth. While standing in conversation, the natives have acquired a peculiar habit of pushing the penis back between the thighs and keeping it from view by crossing one leg over the other.
- 516

Habitations.

- 342 The islanders build no permanent huts or structures to live under. Apart from the shelters afforded by local or natural conditions, such as overhanging trees, the only form of artificial shelter noticed was prepared from the bark of a tree. A long sheet is cut from the trunk and doubled crosswise at its centre. The two ends are then stuck into the ground at an angle of say forty-five degrees. Similar shelters are found on the north coast and elsewhere on the mainland. In the [101] absence of any more permanent structures, the islanders are, in this respect, not so far advanced as the continental Australian aboriginal. Camp fires are, as usual, much in evidence and kept alight during the whole of the night. Fire-sticks are carried during the day time. Sticks and dry timber, collected to feed the fires, are broken to the required length, not across the knees but over the crown of the head.
- 372
- 513 Small sheets of paper bark (*Melaleuca* sp.) are used as mats to lie on when sleeping or camping.

Personal Wear.

- 291 Both male and female walk about in the nude state. The body is anointed with grease and besmeared, in one or more shades of colour, with ochre. The females carry folded sheets of paper bark or large food-carriers about with them, which, upon the approach of strangers, they hold in front of their person.
- 302
- [171] It is of interest here to note that Captain Matthew Flinders,³ as far back as 1803, made a similar observation on the mainland opposite. He saw a girl at Caledon Bay who "wore a small piece of bark, in guise of a fig leaf, which was the sole approximation to clothing seen."

¹ Vide also *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxi, 1907, p. 10.

² Cf. J. MacGillivray, *Narrative Voyage H.M.S. "Rattlesnake"*, p. 14.

³ *A Voyage to Terra Australia*, London, 1814, vol. ii, p. 212.

301 bordered with red. Each of the intervening spaces is again sub-divided into two
531 squares at the centre (and a "half-square" at the sides) by three vertical, white lines bordered with red. The squares and "half-squares" are shaded diagonally with from four to six lines passing downwards and away from the central line in the topmost group, and upwards and away from the centre in the two lower groups of squares. The combined effect resembles the windmill or "wanningi" pattern common throughout Australia. The shading is all in white on one side, but red and white in alternate squares on the opposite side.

301 In another type of this arm decoration, which is also made of bark, the upper
322 united portion is shorter than in the previous case (*vide* Plate VII, Figs. 1 and 3). The top edge is concave and only one oblong window is cut beneath it. The sides have been united by hem-stitching and by the insertion of a few wooden pins which answer the same purpose as rivets. The edges are thickly plastered with beeswax. As in the previous case, the stitches (and the plaster also) are continued only along one side of the loop. A fairly stout rod of wood projects vertically from either end of the top concave edge. Shorter rods project laterally from either top corner of the loop. To the end of each of these rods a plume of white is attached with beeswax. Cockatoo feathers have been chosen and they are fastened by their distal ends so that the fluffy portions are exposed. A number of twisted strands of fur and vegetable fibre pass from the extremity of one horizontal rod diagonally upwards to the base of the vertical rod above, along it to the top, thence horizontally across to the top of the other vertical rod, whence it is continued the same way down the other side to the extremity of the opposite horizontal rod. Beeswax retains these strands in position at the rod-tops, while more strands, wound horizontally from the base of one vertical rod to the other, and also round the base of each, make the former strands secure there. The painted design in this case consists of one large cruciform figure on either side of the looped portion, the arms being modified at the base in a manner suggestive of a snake design. One arm of the cross is white, the other yellow, both being bordered with red. The intervening spaces are shaded red and yellow, the constituent lines being parallel and straight up-and-down in the upper segment and crossed in the lower.

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532 *Corroboree-mask*.—An interesting object is what I take to be a corroboree-mask (*vide* Plate XV, Fig. 5). As I did not see it in use and did not receive the specimen until it was too late to make inquiries, I cannot, with certainty, describe it as such. The object represents an oval structure, 15 centimetres long and 8 wide, which encloses two connected circular rims resembling a solid pair of spectacles. The internal framework is made of split cane, bound together with vegetable strands. The oval portion is covered with human hair string, wound around it and knotted along the outer edge after the modern "button-hole-stitch" fashion. The rims are broad and covered with beeswax. A circle of the red beans of *Abrus praccatorius*, embedded in the wax, surrounds the "eye-holes" on the front side. At one of the lateral extremities, a band of five human hair strings emerges from a cylindrical mass of beeswax and is surrounded, at 6 centimetres distance,

764 displayed considerable feeling in the survivors who placed it there, and the simple order which pervaded the spot would not have disgraced a civilized people. It was an oblong square open at the foot, the remaining end and sides being railed round with trees of 7 feet or 8 feet high, some of which were carved with a stone or shell, and further ornamented by rings of wood, also carved. On the tops of these posts were placed the waddies of the deceased. . . . At the head was placed a piece of a canoe and a spear, and round the grave were several little baskets made of the fan-palm leaf, which, from their small size, we thought had been placed there by the children of the departed. Nothing could exceed the neatness of the whole; the sand and the earth were cleared away from the sides, and not a shrub or weed was suffered to grow within the area."

[114] Major Campbell,¹ who in 1826 relieved Captain Barlow as commandant of Fort Dundas, in his interesting memoir to the Royal Geographical Society also refers to native graves observed by him. He writes: "It appears to be the custom of the natives to bury their dead, their burial places being in retired spots near their most frequented encamping ground. The burial place is circular, probably 10 or 12 feet in diameter; it is surrounded by upright poles, many of which are formed at the top like lances and halberds, 14 or 15 feet high; and between these the spear and waddies (probably of the deceased) are stuck upright in the ground." This description applies equally well to those seen by us, with the exception that the cleared circular space was considerably larger in our case, while the height of the posts, above the ground, was less.

764 71 In 1847, Bete Jukes,² naturalist to the expedition of H.M.S. "Fly," described and figured a native tomb seen at Port Lihou in Endeavour Strait; "Round a central mound of sand there had been a broad ditch or hollow scooped out and swept quite clean for several yards in width. The mound was of a quadrangular form, 8 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 3 feet high. A stout post stood upright at each corner, and the sides were ornamented by rows of the ribs of the dugong placed regularly along them. . . . On each post was either a large shell or the skull of a dugong, and on the grave were several other dugongs' skulls and shells of the *Nautilus pompilius*. All these, as well as the posts, were smeared with red ochre." Additional interest is attached to the description of Jukes, since he states that "between the two posts, near the sea, a long stick had been inserted, ornamented with feathers and streamers of grass, and fastened to the post by other cross-sticks similarly ornamented." From this wording, and more so from the figure reproduced by him, it would seem that the decoration between the posts was one of those sacred ornaments to which I have elsewhere referred as the *wanningi*.³

¹ *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, London, 1834, vol. iv, p. 158.

² *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage H.M.S. "Fly,"* vol. i, pp. 149 and 150 (1847).

³ *Vide also* George French Angus, *S. Australia*, illustrated, 1847, Plate XXIV; Edge Partington, *Album III*, Plate CXIV; Spencer and Gillen: *Native Tribes Cent. Austral.*, pp. 230 and 231; W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies, Queensland Aborigines*, Fig. 437;

A record of something of the kind having existed on the mainland is contained in MacGillivray's narrative (1852). In referring to the burial-ceremonies of natives of the Cobourg Peninsula, this author¹ states that "when decomposition has gone on sufficiently far, the bones are carefully removed, painted red, wrapped up in bark, and carried about with the tribe for some time; after which they are finally deposited, either in a hollow tree or a shallow grave, over which a low mound of earth and stones is raised, occasionally ornamented with posts at the corners."

This same author refers to similar burial ceremonies which he observed of the "Kowraregas," natives inhabiting the Prince of Wales group of islands, situated near Cape York in Torres Strait. He writes² of a grave he saw at Port Lihou, some time after Bete Jukes' visit: "When the head of a family dies at Muralug, the body is laid out upon a framework³ of sticks raised a foot from the ground and is there allowed to rot . . . until the head of the corpse becomes nearly detached by the process of putrefaction, when it is removed and handed over to the custody of the eldest wife. . . . The body, or rather the headless skeleton, is then interred in a shallow grave, over which a mound is raised, ornamented by wooden posts at the corners painted red, with sometimes shells or other decorations attached to them. . . ."

Perhaps it would not be out of place to make a passing reference to the native burial-place discovered by Captain Sturt⁴ near Lake Buddah, off the Macquarie River, in New South Wales (latitude 32° 5', longitude 148° 10'). "It consists of an oblong mound, with three semicircular seats. A walk encompassed the whole from which three others branched off, for a few yards only, into the forest. Several cypresses, overhanging the grave, were fancifully carved on the inner side, and on one the shape of a heart was deeply engraved." A similarity of method will be apparent. Instead of having separate carved posts surrounding the grave, the natives of Macquarie River carved the trees surrounding it. The walk encompassing the mound might be regarded as the equivalent of the cleared space characteristic of the island graves.

Mr. P. Foelsche and I have described painted and ornamented poles that are erected close to the graves of deceased members of the Larrekiya tribe in the Port Darwin district.⁵

During our geological explorations of the north-west coast of the Northern

E. Clement, *Publication of Royal Ethnological Museum at Leiden*, series ii, No. 6 (Catalogue by J. D. E. Schmeltz); vol. xvi, Plate V, Fig. 8; H. Basedow, *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxviii, 1904, pp. 22 and 28, Plate III, Fig. 4; H. Klatsch, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1906, pp. 792, and 1907, p. 654.

¹ J. MacGillivray, *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. "Rattlesnake," 1852*, vol. i, p. 149.

² *Op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 32.

³ *Vide* references given by me in *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxxi, 1907, p. 6.

⁴ *Vide* Charles Sturt: *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia*, London, 1834, vol. i, p. 14, and frontispiece.

⁵ *Vide* *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. v, 1882, p. 5, and *op. cit.*, vol. xxxi, 1907, p. 7.

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Natives of Bathurst Island, North Australia.

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level, further material has been cut away to reduce its thickness by about 1 centimetre all round. The top portion, which has the appearance of a knob, has been daubed with red ochre; the sunken portion, immediately beneath, is white (*vide* Plate XVII, Fig. 2). The lower surface of the post bears five vertical bands, three being of white pipe-clay and two of yellow ochre. Two of the former have a border of red, the third one of yellow; and both of the latter (yellow) are bordered with white. Three of the intervening spaces are shaded with inclined lines of white, the remaining two are each filled with a vertical row of white ericoid figures. The original surface upon which the pattern was drawn is charred.

Having persuaded the natives to repaint the designs on the tomb-posts, in places where they were defective or missing, they set about the work with enthusiasm and did not rest until they had repainted the whole of the surfaces. To accomplish this they leaned the posts against trees and divided themselves into small groups of two to four, each of which undertook part of the work (*vide* Plate XVI, Figs. 1 and 2). Youths were sent to the main camp, whence they soon after returned with lumps of red and yellow ochre and white pipe-clay (*vide* Plate XV, Fig. 2). From these they broke off small pieces and crushed them by hand in the strong concave shells of the bivalve mollusc *Cyrena essingtonensis*.¹ To this crumbled pigment sufficient water was added to make a thick paint, more water being added from time to time as required. One might look upon these shells containing the mixed paint as representing primitive palettes (*vide* Plate XV, Fig. 1). The paint is applied to the surface by means of crudely made, yet effective, brushes. Short pieces of the creeping calamus are cut with the sharp edge of a shell and one or both of their ends chewed until all the fibres have become separated (*vide* Plate XV, Fig. 3); much in the same way as the flower-stalks of the fan-palm are chewed when feeding on honey (*vide* p. 300). Both of these small artists' requisites are highly interesting inasmuch as they show us a decidedly primitive, yet to the present day practically unaltered stage in the evolution of art.

It is evident that the posts have been cut and carved with a sharp bladed instrument, in all probability a tomahawk. Captain Flinders² as far back as 1803 noticed that the natives on the north coast (Caledon Bay) were familiar with the use of iron instruments and that they tried to steal his axes. He, therefore, suspected that "they had been previously visited by people possessing iron instruments." Later, he was himself able to confirm this supposition when he discovered, near to Cape Wilberforce, a fleet of proas from Macassar, the crew of which were in the habit of visiting the north coast of Australia to collect trepang, which they took to Timor and sold to the Chinese.³

¹ We have before us an interesting analogy, when we recollect that in our own country the shells of fresh-water mussels were, in former days, much used and are still used as a receptacle for mixing water-colours; whence also the name *Urie pictorem*.

² *A Voyage to Terra Australia*, London, 1814, vol. ii, pp. 213 and 228-231.

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HERBERT BASEDOW.—Notes on the Natives of
Bathurst Island, North Australia

171 When Captain King¹ dropped anchor in Apsley Strait in 1818, and came
177 into contact with natives near Luxmore Head on Melville Island, he noticed that
412 "they repeatedly asked for axes by imitating the action of chopping."

171 Ethnologically these tomb-posts are of the greatest importance. With the
764 exception of the records left by Jukes and MacGillivray, we know of nothing of
532 the kind existing nowadays on the mainland. That, however, the inhabitants of some
of the Torres Strait islands adopt methods of preserving the memory of their dead
by means of painted and decorated structures of a different type is an established
fact. The Continental Australian certainly, also, has methods of his own to mark a
place of burial, but in a decidedly more transitory and less laborious way. The
latter leaves already existing belongings of the deceased upon the grave; the islander,
in addition, surrounds the spot with specially prepared posts such as have been
described herein. Apart from the carvings, the painted designs, alone, are quite
superior to anything existing on the mainland. The marked symmetry of the
individual patterns and their diversity, when compared with one another, can
hardly find a parallel on the mainland. We might look upon these island
productions as representing interesting and independent transition stages between
the primitive art of the Continental Australian, on the one hand, and the more
perfected types of equatorial island tribes to the north of Australia, on the other.

APPENDIX.

NATIVE OCHRE DRAWINGS ON BARK FROM MELVILLE ISLAND,
NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA.

531 While visiting Bathurst Island in 1911, I also entered several of the inlets of
Melville Island from Apsley Strait. At one point, not far from the southern
entrance to the Strait, where some aborigines were living in huts near to Cooper's
Buffalo-Shooters Camp, I found the drawings here described. They were upon
sheets of bark of the Woollybutt (*Eucalyptus miniata*), used for building their
shelters and huts. All drawings are in pipe-clay and red ochre; these materials
having been smeared or squirted on to the bark in the form of a thin paste or in
aqueous suspension. Typical among the drawings of the aborigines on the mainland
are the negative imprints of hands produced by holding the palm of the hand flat
against the surface and squirting a mouthful of pipe-clay or ochre, suspended in
water, against the back of the hand and around it. The surrounding surface is thus
coloured so that, when the hand is removed, its outline stands out conspicuously by
the absence of colour.²

¹ *Survey of the Intertropical Coasts of Australia*, 1837, vol. i, pp. 111 and 121.

² *Vide Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, 1907, vol. xxxi, p. 56, Plate XII. Among other
references note E. Giles, *Australia Twice Traversed*, 1880, vol. i, p. 78. "The drawing is done

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YOUNG GIRL AND BOY accompany fathers as men bring yams from pool to the ceremonial ring. There the yams will be λ

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part of Tiwi speech. Poetic license in pronunciation and syllabification often occurs. The Tiwi have high regard for the linguistic ability needed to become a good Tiwi composer and singer, and instruction in the art of song composition and delivery is given to the initiates. Each initiate must perform in the *Kulama* before he can be considered a "graduate." According to my Tiwi informants, this requirement is the hardest of all, and it is also the reason for there being no set age for initiation. The old people are said to watch the young, and when the observers consider them mature enough, they swoop down upon their choices "like chicken hawks, without warning"—as the Tiwi say—and start the initiates along the path to adulthood.

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As far as I know, the *Kulama* ceremony has no parallel elsewhere in Australia. And there are many interesting questions that come to mind concerning the origin of the *Kulama* as it exists today. For instance, why is instruction in the preparation of a poisonous yam that is not part of the daily diet considered so important for initiation into adulthood? What is the origin of the idea that a yam has power over good and evil, and health and sickness? Why is such prominence accorded a yam in what is principally a hunting and gathering society?

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Any answers to these questions must be highly speculative, for the origin of the ceremony and its development lie in the unrecorded history of the Tiwi. However, I believe the following statements may well be valid.

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Instruction in the natural resources of the land was considered vital to becoming an adult. Because the *Kulama* yam is poisonous and is not widely distributed, it was never part of the regular diet, but it could be used in economic emergencies if properly prepared. Instruction in its preparation was therefore extremely important as a potential survival measure. However, since the Tiwi live in a favorable environment, it is highly probable that such emergencies were very rare, so it was considered expedient to hold annual instruction periods. Because knowledge of λ [See P. 15, (A) for other λ] of λ and picture -- Analyst]

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174 the technique had to be made meaningful to the initiates, the lifesaving qualities of this famine food were explained as health-giving powers. A ceremony accompanied by song and dance was certainly a dramatic and effective means of impressing the initiates in preparation methods. The ritual served another purpose as well: because traveling is so difficult during the rainy season, each household is isolated from the others. The *Kulama* ritual follows this period, and it is natural to expect a reunion to be an occasion to exchange news, settle differences, and tell stories or sing songs that keep traditions alive.

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177 MUCH harder to account for is the Tiwi idea of adulthood. That every adult is solely responsible for his own health and wealth, and that success in life depends entirely on personal behavior and industry, are ideals strangely similar to those that underlie the American way of life, despite the great gulf between the aboriginal culture and our own. But it is not at all surprising that the Tiwi have a great sympathy for much of Western civilization. Many hold the same views as the *Kulama* singer quoted earlier in this article who saw his children wearing clothes and shoes and going to school to learn to write, for this is the Tiwi's contemporaneous idea of success in a way of life introduced to them only a few short years ago.

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[114] Early in the summer of 1962 I revisited the Tiwi for two weeks. Although I knew that the Tiwi desired schooling and training in European ways of life and would seize any such opportunity afforded them, I was hardly prepared for the tremendous changes that had taken place during the eight years that had elapsed since my first visit.

[871] Three months after the *Kulama* ceremony of 1954, a government school was opened. Now all the Tiwi children go to school, and some who have finished the six-year program in the government school have received subsequent training as teaching or nursing assistants. Some others have had "on-the-job" training in various activities connected with a large-scale forestry project that has been started on Melville Island. In fact, all the able-bodied Tiwi men and women are currently employed, and their tasks bear little or no relation to their old life in the bush.

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[868] It is perhaps significant—but to me not at all surprising—that I did not hear a single real complaint from the Tiwi regarding their new manner of living. They seem to like it and are anticipating bigger and better things (in the Western sense) for their children. Hunting has become a week-end diversion and the children receive little or no real instruction in that traditional skill.

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884 SOME aspects of Tiwi life are slow to die, however. Most of the old taboos, the observance of which was considered necessary in the past in order to insure health and wealth, are still observed, although at least one teen-ager expressed doubt that the taboos had any actual effect on the outcome of one's life. Western medicine and public health practices are fast replacing belief in the *Kulama*. During the past eight years only three men have begun the six years of training for *Kulama* initiation, and some of the older men no longer participate in the ceremony. However, as long as even a small number of Tiwi believe in the *Kulama*, the ritual will survive, but I doubt that it will for long.

000 NEAR END of *Kulama* ceremony, performer, although hoarse and tired, must continue to sing until late in the night.
[P. 16, (8)]

797 The couples marry young without any thought for the future.
 582 They just marry as, and when, they feel inclined, and the mission
 342 fathers provide the new home. Under the palms beside the
 Strait are many of the queer little iron humpies provided, just a
 roof, as it were, sloping on each side from the ridge-pole to the
 ground. The whole can be picked up and moved to a fresh
 position when fleas become too numerous and the surroundings
 otherwise unpleasant. These humpies scarcely seem attractive
 to white folk, but the islanders like them, and they are at least
 a great improvement on the dog-kennels of old iron that the
 blacks persist in erecting for themselves on the beach at Darwin.
 797 Proper houses are provided in the Kahlin compound there, but
 342 the blacks despise them; and, although the miserable humpies on
 the beach are demolished from time to time by the authorities,
 they are all up again by next evening. The good fathers know
 what the islanders prefer, and they have given the married
 couples the kind of accommodation in which they feel most
 happy. The humpies may be hot and stuffy, but they are dry
 inside when it rains.

142 The inland blacks, in many respects, differ considerably from
 144 the tribes of the mainland. They are excessively hirsute, and,
 on attaining maturity, the men grow long beards, many being of
 truly patriarchal proportions. The upper lip is kept bare, which
 practice seems to emphasize the magnificence of the beard.
 Shocks of hair, sometimes standing six inches high, add to a
 wildly impressive appearance. They are tall and muscular, and,
 as they stride along, they seem the very acme of physical develop-
 ment, a living advertisement for the natural, open-air existence.
 302 The hairs, by the way, are plucked from the upper lip one by
 one, and this painful proceeding is undertaken in the calmest
 manner, certainly with less fuss and facial distortion than the
 average white man makes during his morning shave.

171 The use of the woomera for throwing spears, and of the
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[p. 15(A)]

● 171 boomerang, is unknown to the islanders. Ceremonial customs,
 [411] language, origin, and burial rites all differ from those of the
 mainland tribes, and constitute an interesting study for anthropologists. They are the only aborigines who erect memorials on
 764 the graves of the departed, and, in the forest beside the
 [322] aerodrome, you may see a typical grave surrounded with queerly-
 532 carved ironwood totem-poles. The poles, some eight feet in
 height, are carved in varying patterns. They had been painted
 in highly decorative designs with red, yellow, and white ochre,
 with black bands of charcoal to give sharp and artistic contrast.
 Each kindred totem to that of the deceased must place a pole
 at the grave. Failure to erect a pole is supposed to signify that
 no sorrow is felt for the death, and punishment will follow.
 Something unpleasant always does happen to those who neglect
 this duty.

797 AFTER these necessary digressions, let us return to my visit
 to the mission station. We followed the fathers over the stile,
 up an avenue of palms, and on through the garden, where
 [245] pineapples and bananas grow, and there are rows of immense
 and beautifully shady mango-trees. Sturdy, fuzzy-headed
 [262] aborigines strode in front (one of them had just come in with
 a couple of kangaroos for the larder), and the boys trooped
 along behind us. The quarters of the fathers are very much
 those of bachelors, perfectly bare, with guns in the corners and
 a few native weapons and curios hanging on the walls.

Here two lubras brought us morning tea, and here I learnt
 much of the foregoing matters. The fathers themselves are
 entertaining men of the world, and their white cricket shirts
 and khaki slacks gave no indication of their calling. The boys
 797 gathered at the foot of the steps leading up to the quarters,
 522 and every now and then black-bearded Father McGrath would
 banter them in their own language. Like all the native peoples

[p.15 (B)]